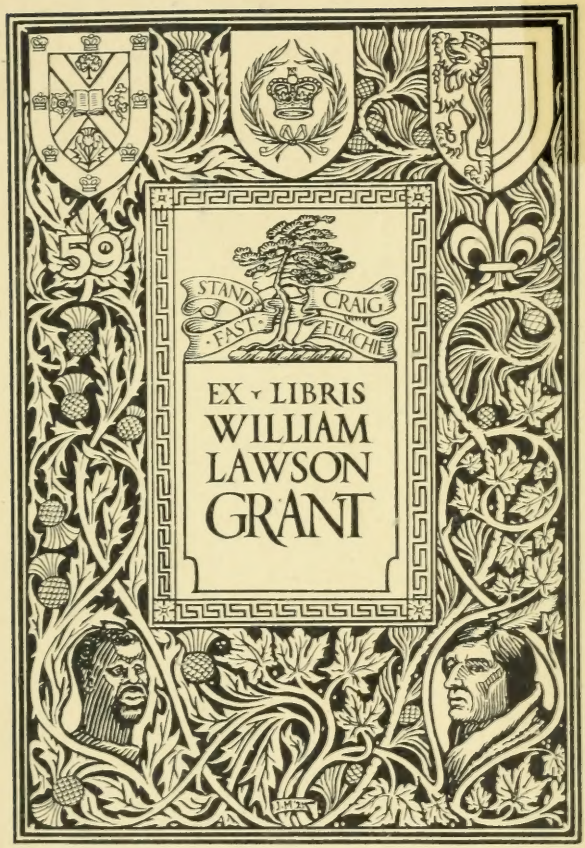
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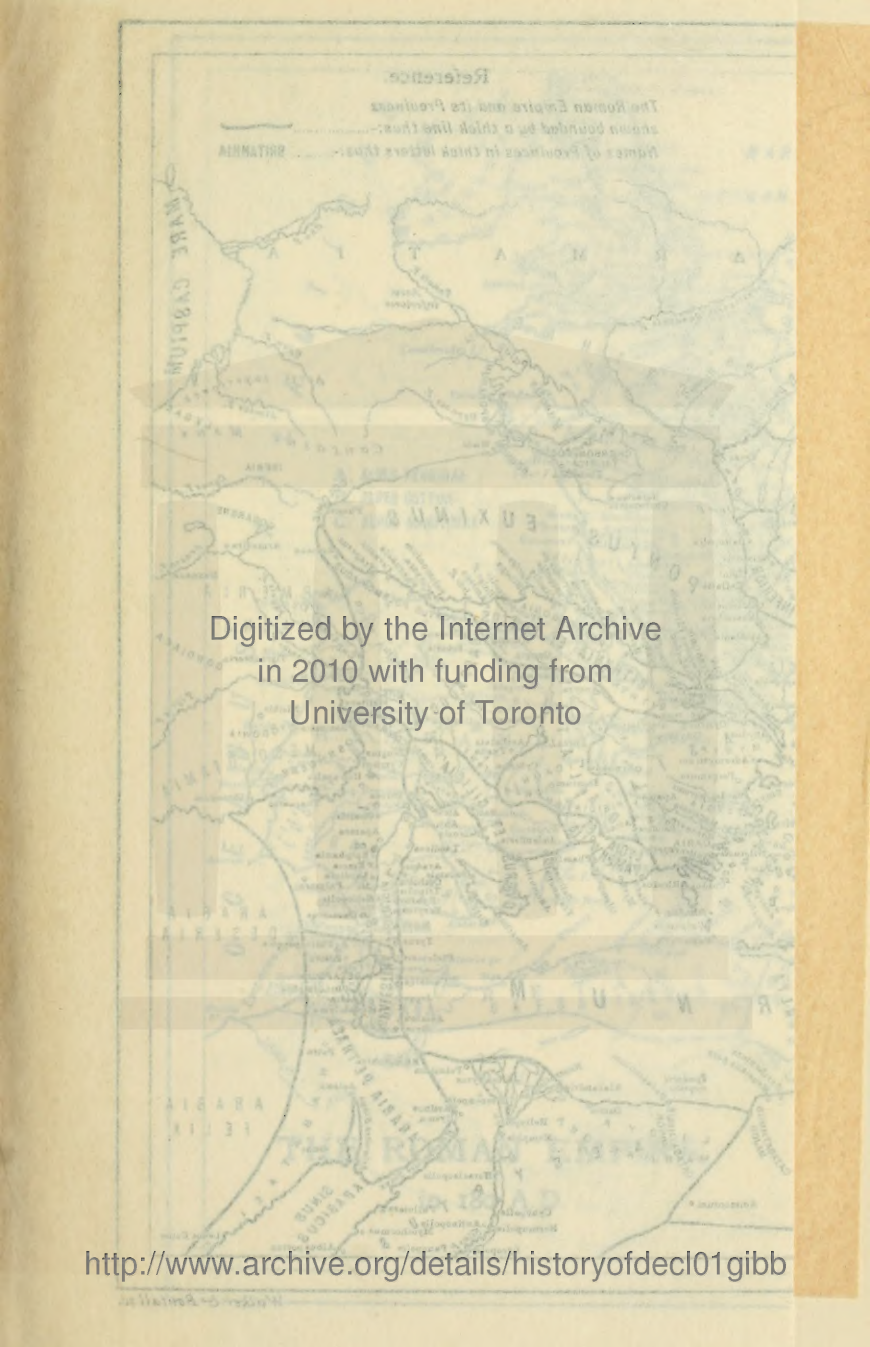
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

by

CHARITY GRANT

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

VOL. I.


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B. ALPES COTTIAE
C. ALPES MARITIMAE
THE ROMAN EMPIRE
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THE HISTORY

OF THE

DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

BY

EDWARD GIBBON

EDITED IN SEVEN VOLUMES

WITH INTRODUCTION, NOTES, APPENDICES, AND INDEX

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PREFACE OF THE AUTHOR

It is not my intention to detain the reader by expatiating on the variety, or the importance of the subject, which I have undertaken to treat; since the merit of the choice would serve to render the weakness of the execution still more apparent, and still less excusable. But, as I have presumed to lay before the Public a *first* volume only[1] of the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, it will perhaps be expected that I should explain, in a few words, the nature and limits of my general plan.

The memorable series of revolutions, which, in the course of about thirteen centuries, gradually undermined, and at length destroyed, the solid fabric of human greatness, may, with some propriety, be divided into the three following periods:

I. The first of these periods may be traced from the age of Trajan and the Antonines, when the Roman monarchy, having attained its full strength and maturity, began to verge towards its decline; and will extend to the subversion of the Western Empire, by the barbarians of Germany and Scythia, the rude ancestors of the most polished nations of modern Europe. This extraordinary revolution, which subjected Rome to the power of a Gothic conqueror, was completed about the beginning of the sixth century.

[1] The first volume of the quarto, which is now contained in the two first volumes of the octavo, edition.

II. The second period of the Decline and Fall of Rome, may be supposed to commence with the reign of Justinian, who by his laws, as well as by his victories, restored a transient splendour to the Eastern Empire. It will comprehend the invasion of Italy by the Lombards; the conquest of the Asiatic and African provinces by the Arabs, who embraced the religion of Mahomet; the revolt of the Roman people against the feeble princes of Constantinople; and the elevation of Charlemagne, who, in the year 800, established the second, or German Empire of the West.

III. The last and longest of these periods includes about six centuries and a half; from the revival of the Western Empire till the taking of Constantinople by the Turks and the extinction of a degenerate race of princes, who continued to assume the titles of Cæsar and Augustus, after their dominions were contracted to the limits of a single city; in which the language, as well as manners, of the ancient Romans had been long since forgotten. The writer who should undertake to relate the events of this period would find himself obliged to enter into the general history of the Crusades, as far as they contributed to the ruin of the Greek Empire; and he would scarcely be able to restrain his curiosity from making some enquiry into the state of the city of Rome during the darkness and confusion of the middle ages.

As I have ventured, perhaps too hastily, to commit to the press a work, which, in every sense of the word, deserves the epithet of imperfect, I consider myself as contracting an engagement to finish, most probably in a second volume,[1] the

[1] The Author, as it requently happens, took an inadequate measure of his growing work. The remainder of the first period has filled *two* volumes in quarto, being the third, fourth, fifth and sixth volumes of the octavo edition.

first of these memorable periods; and to deliver to the Public the complete History of the Decline and Fall of Rome, from the age of the Antonines to the subversion of the Western Empire. With regard to the subsequent periods, though I may entertain some hopes, I dare not presume to give any assurances. The execution of the extensive plan which I have described would connect the ancient and modern history of the World; but it would require many years of health, of leisure, and of perseverance.

BENTINCK STREET,
February 1, 1776.

P.S.—The entire History, which is now published, of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire in the West abundantly discharges my engagements with the Public. Perhaps their favourable opinion may encourage me to prosecute a work, which, however laborious it may seem, is the most agreeable occupation of my leisure hours.

BENTINCK STREET,
March 1, 1781.

An Author easily persuades himself that the public opinion is still favourable to his labours; and I have now embraced the serious resolution of proceeding to the last period of my original design, and of the Roman Empire, the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, in the year one thousand four hundred and fifty-three. The most patient reader, who computes that three ponderous volumes[1] have been already employed on the events of four centuries, may, perhaps, be alarmed at the long prospect of nine hundred years. But it is not my intention to expatiate with the

[1] Containing chaps. i. to xxxviii.]

same minuteness on the whole series of the Byzantine history. At our entrance into this period, the reign of Justinian and the conquests of the Mahometans will deserve and detain our attention, and the last age of Constantinople (the Crusades and the Turks) is connected with the revolutions of Modern Europe. From the seventh to the eleventh century, the obscure interval will be supplied by a concise narrative of such facts as may still appear either interesting or important.

BENTINCK STREET,
March 1, 1782.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE NOTES[1]

Diligence and accuracy are the only merits which an historical writer may ascribe to himself; if any merit indeed can be assumed from the performance of an indispensable duty. I may therefore be allowed to say that I have carefully examined all the original materials that could illustrate the subject which I had undertaken to treat. Should I ever complete the extensive design which has been sketched out in the preface, I might perhaps conclude it with a critical account of the authors consulted during the progress of the whole work; and, however such an attempt might incur the censure of ostentation, I am persuaded that it would be susceptible of entertainment as well as information.

At present I shall content myself with a single observation. The Biographers, who, under the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine, composed or rather compiled, the lives of the emperors, from Hadrian to the sons of Carus, are usually mentioned under the names of Ælius Spartianus, Julius Capitolinus, Ælius Lampridius, Vulcatius Gallicanus, Trebellius Pollio, and Flavius Vopiscus. But there is so much perplexity in the titles of the MSS., and so many disputes have arisen among the critics (see Fabricius Biblioth. Latin. l. iii. c. 6) concerning their number, their names and their respective property, that for the most part I have quoted them without distinction, under the general and well-known title of the Augustan History.

[1][Which in the first quarto edition of vol. i. were printed at the end of the volume.]

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIRST OCTAVO EDITION

The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire is now delivered to the public in a more convenient form. Some alterations and improvements had presented themselves to my mind, but I was unwilling to injure or offend the purchasers of the preceding editions. The accuracy of the corrector of the press has been already tried and approved; and perhaps I may stand excused if, amidst the avocations of a busy writer, I have preferred the pleasures of composition and study to the minute diligence of revising a former publication.

Bentinck Street,
April 20, 1783.

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH VOLUME OF THE QUARTO EDITION

I now discharge my promise, and complete my design, of writing the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, both in the West and the East. The whole period extends from the age of Trajan and the Antonines to the taking of Constantinople by Mahomet the Second; and includes a review of the Crusades and the state of Rome during the middle ages. Since the publication of the first volume, twelve years have elapsed; twelve years, according to my wish, "of health, of leisure and of perseverance". I may now congratulate my deliverance from a long and laborious service, and my satisfaction will be pure and perfect, if the public favour should be extended to the conclusion of my work.

It was my first intention to have collected under one view the numerous authors, of every age and language, from whom I have derived the materials of this history; and I am still convinced that the apparent ostentation would be more than compensated by real use. If I have renounced this idea, if I have declined an undertaking which had obtained the approbation of a master-artist,[1] my excuse may be found in the extreme difficulty of assigning a proper measure to such a catalogue. A naked list of names and editions would not be satisfactory either to myself or my readers: the characters of the principal Authors of the Roman and Byzantine History have been occasionally connected with the events which they

[1] See Dr. Robertson's Preface to his History of America.

describe; a more copious and critical enquiry might indeed deserve, but it would demand, an elaborate volume, which might swell by degrees into a general library of historical writers. For the present I shall content myself with renewing my serious protestation, that I have always endeavoured to draw from the fountain-head; that my curiosity, as well as a sense of duty, has always urged me to study the originals; and that, if they have sometimes eluded my search, I have carefully marked the secondary evidence, on whose faith a passage or a fact were reduced to depend.

I shall soon visit the banks of the lake of Lausanne, a country which I have known and loved from my early youth. Under a mild government, amidst a beauteous landskip, in a life of leisure and independence, and among a people of easy and elegant manners, I have enjoyed, and may again hope to enjoy, the varied pleasures of retirement and society. But I shall ever glory in the name and character of an Englishman: I am proud of my birth in a free and enlightened country; and the approbation of that country is the best and most honourable reward for my labours. Were I ambitious of any other Patron than the Public, I would inscribe this work to a Statesman, who, in a long, a stormy, and at length an unfortunate administration, had many political opponents, almost without a personal enemy: who has retained, in his fall from power, many faithful and disinterested friends; and who, under the pressure of severe infirmity, enjoys the lively vigour of his mind, and the felicity of his incomparable temper. Lord North will permit me to express the feelings of friendship in the language of truth: but even truth and friendship should be silent, if he still dispensed the favours of the crown.

In a remote solitude, vanity may still whisper in my ear that my readers, perhaps, may enquire whether, in the conclusion of the present work, I am now taking an everlasting farewell. They shall hear all that I know myself, all that I

could reveal to the most intimate friend. The motives of action or silence are now equally balanced; nor can I pronounce, in my most secret thoughts, on which side the scale will preponderate. I cannot dissemble that twelve ample octavos must have tried, and may have exhausted, the indulgence of the Public; that, in the repetition of similar attempts, a successful Author has much more to lose, than he can hope to gain; that I am now descending into the vale of years; and that the most respectable of my countrymen, the men whom I aspire to imitate, have resigned the pen of history about the same period of their lives. Yet I consider that the annals of ancient and modern times may afford many rich and interesting subjects; that I am still possessed of health and leisure; that by the practice of writing some skill and facility must be acquired; and that in the ardent pursuit of truth and knowledge I am not conscious of decay. To an active mind, indolence is more painful than labour; and the first months of my liberty will be occupied and amused in the excursions of curiosity and taste. By such temptations I have been sometimes seduced from the rigid duty even of a pleasing and voluntary task: but my time will now be my own; and in the use or abuse of independence I shall no longer fear my own reproaches or those of my friends. I am fairly entitled to a year of jubilee: next summer and the following winter will rapidly pass away; and experience only can determine whether I shall still prefer the freedom and variety of study to the design and composition of a regular work, which animates, while it confines, the daily application of the Author. Caprice and accident may influence my choice; but the dexterity of self-love will contrive to applaud either active industry or philosophic repose.

DOWNING STREET,
May 1, 1788.

P.S.—I shall embrace this opportunity of introducing two

verbal remarks, which have not conveniently offered themselves to my notice. 1. As often as I use the definitions of *beyond* the Alps, the Rhine, the Danube, &c., I generally suppose myself at Rome, and afterwards at Constantinople: without observing whether this relative geography may agree with the local, but variable, situation of the reader or the historian. 2. In proper names of foreign, and especially of Oriental, origin, it should be always our aim to express in our English version a faithful copy of the original. But this rule, which is founded on a just regard to uniformity and truth, must often be relaxed; and the exceptions will be limited or enlarged by the custom of the language and the taste of the interpreter. Our alphabets may be often defective: a harsh sound, an uncouth spelling, might offend the ear or the eye of our countrymen; and some words, notoriously corrupt, are fixed, and, as it were, naturalized in the vulgar tongue. The prophet *Mohammed* can no longer be stripped of the famous, though improper appellation of Mahomet: the well-known cities of Aleppo, Damascus and Cairo, would almost be lost in the strange descriptions of *Haleb*, *Demashk* and *Al Cahira:* the titles and offices of the Ottoman empire are fashioned by the practice of three hundred years; and we are pleased to blend the three Chinese monosyllables *Con-fŭ-tzee* in the respectable name of Confucius, or even to adopt the Portuguese corruption of Mandarin. But I would vary the use of Zoroaster and *Zerdusht*, as I drew my information from Greece or Persia: since our connexion with India, the genuine *Timour* is restored to the throne of Tamerlane: our most correct writers have retrenched the *Al*, the superfluous article, from the Koran; and we escape an ambiguous termination by adopting *Moslem* instead of Musulman, in the plural number. In these, and in a thousand examples, the shades of distinction are often minute; and I can feel, where I cannot explain the motives of my choice.

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INTRODUCTION

BY THE EDITOR

GIBBON is one of those few writers who hold as high a place in the history of literature as in the roll of great historians. He concerns us here as an historian; our business is to consider how far the view which he has presented of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire can be accepted as faithful to the facts, and in what respects it needs correction in the light of discoveries which have been made since he wrote. But the fact that his work, composed more than a hundred years ago, is still successful with the general circle of educated people, and has not gone the way of Hume and Robertson, whom we laud as "classics" and leave on the cold shelves, is due to the singularly happy union of the historian and the man of letters. Gibbon thus ranks with Thucydides and Tacitus, and is perhaps the clearest example that brilliance of style and accuracy of statement—in Livy's case conspicuously divorced—are perfectly compatible in an historian.

His position among men of letters depends both on the fact that he was an exponent of important ideas and on his style. The appreciation of his style devolves upon the history of literature; but it may be interesting to illustrate how much attention he paid to it, by alterations which he made in his text. The first volume was published, in quarto form, in 1776, and the second quarto edition of this volume, which appeared in 1782, exhibits a considerable number of

Changes in the second edition of the first volume

variants. Having carefully collated the two editions throughout the first fourteen chapters, I have observed that, in most cases, the changes were made for the sake not of correcting mis-statements of fact, but of improving the turn of a sentence, rearranging the dactyls and cretics, or securing greater accuracy of expression. Some instances may be interesting.

Instances

	First edition.	*Second edition.*
P. 2.	Instead of exposing his person and his legions to the arrows of the Parthians, he *satisfied himself with* the restitution of the standards and prisoners which *were* taken in the defeat of Crassus.	Instead of exposing his person and his legions to the arrows of the Parthians he *obtained, by an honourable treaty*, the restitution of the standards and prisoners which *had been* taken in the defeat of Crassus.
P. 10.	The peasant or mechanic, imbibed the useful prejudice . . . that, although the prowess of a private soldier, *might* escape the notice of fame, *it would be in his power* to confer glory or disgrace on the company, the legion, or even the army, to whose honours he was associated.	The peasant, or mechanic imbibed the useful prejudice . . . that although the prowess of a private soldier *must often* escape the notice of fame, his own behaviour might sometimes confer glory or disgrace on the company, the legion, or even the army, to whose honours he was associated.
P. 52.	The olive, in the western world, *was the companion as well as the symbol of peace.*	The olive, in the western world, *followed the progress of peace of which it was considered as the symbol.*
P. 59.	The *general* definition of a monarchy seems to be that of a state, &c.	The *obvious* definition of a monarchy seems to be that of a state, &c.
P. 62.	*On the most important occasions*, peace and war were seriously debated in the senate.	*The most important resolutions of* peace and war were seriously debated in the senate.

	First edition.	*Second edition.*
P. 87.	The present greatness of the Roman state, the corruption of manners, and the licence of the soldiers, *added* new *weight* to the advocates of monarchy.	The present greatness of the Roman state, the corruption of manners, and the licence of the soldiers *supplied new arguments* to the advocates of monarchy.
P. 70.	However the latter [*i.e.* the name Cæsar], was diffused by adoption and female alliance, Nero was the last prince who could *claim so noble an extraction.*	However the latter was diffused by adoption and female alliance, Nero was the last prince who could *allege any hereditary claim to the honours of the Julian line.*
P. 73.	Which . . . had *just finished* the conquest of Judæa.	Which . . . had *recently achieved* the conquest of Judæa.
P. 106.	To ascend a throne *streaming* with the blood of so near a relation.	To ascend a throne *polluted* with the *recent* blood of so near a relation.
P. 110.	Severus, who *had sufficient greatness of mind to adopt* several useful institutions from a vanquished enemy.	Severus, who *afterwards displayed the greatness of his mind by adopting* several useful institutions from a vanquished enemy.

These are a few specimens of the numerous cases in which alterations have been made for the purpose of improving the language. Sometimes, in the new edition, statements are couched in a less positive form. For example:—

P 9.	The legions themselves *consisted* of Roman citizens.	The legions themselves *were supposed to consist* of Roman citizens.
P. 77.	And he even condescended to give lessons of philosophy in a more public manner than *suited* the modesty of a sage or the dignity of an emperor.	And he even condescended to give lessons of philosophy in a more public manner than *was perhaps consistent with* the modesty of a sage or the dignity of an emperor.

There are also cases, where something is added which, without changing the general sense, renders a statement fuller, more picturesque, or more vivid. Thus :—

	First edition.	*Second edition.*
P. 24.	A sandy desert skirted along the doubtful confine of Syria, from the Euphrates to the Red Sea.	A sandy desert, *alike destitute of wood and water*, skirts along the doubtful confine of Syria, from the Euphrates to the Red Sea.
P. 48.	The spirit of improvement had passed the Alps and been felt even in the woods of Britain.	The spirit of improvement had passed the Alps and been felt even in the woods of Britain, *which were gradually cleared away to open a free space for convenient and elegant habitations.*
P. 57.	The sciences of physic and astronomy were cultivated *with some degree of reputation;* but if we except the inimitable Lucian, *an* age of indolence passed away without *producing* a single writer of genius, *who deserved the attention of posterity.*	The sciences of physic and astronomy were *successfully* cultivated *by the Greeks; the observations of Ptolemy and the writings of Galen are studied by those who have improved their discoveries and corrected their errors;* but if we except the inimitable Lucian, *this* age of indolence passed away without *having produced* a single writer of *original* genius, *or who excelled in the arts of elegant composition.*

Gibbon's autograph annotations to the first chapter of his work

It may be noticed in this connexion that at a later period Gibbon set to work to revise the second edition, but did not get further than p. 32 of the first volume.[1] His own copy with autograph marginal notes was exhibited last year, on the occasion of the Gibbon Centenary, by the

[1] It is stated that there are also unimportant annotations in vols. iv. and vi.

Royal Historical Society, and is to be seen in the British Museum. The corrections and annotations are as follows :—

"To describe the prosperous condition of their empire." Read *times* for *empire*. P. 1 = 1 of this edition.

"And afterwards from the death of Marcus Antoninus." The following note is entered : "Should I not have given the *history* of that fortunate period which was interposed between two iron ages? Should I not have deduced the decline of the Empire from the Civil Wars that ensued after the Fall of Nero, or even from the tyranny which succeeded the reign of Augustus? Alas! I should: but of what avail is this tardy knowledge? Where error is irreparable, repentance is useless."

"To deduce the most important circumstances of its decline and fall: a revolution which will ever be remembered, and is still felt by the nations of the earth." These words are erased and the following are substituted: "To prosecute the decline and fall of the empire of Rome: of whose language, religion and laws the impression will be long preserved in our own and the neighbouring countries of Europe". To which an observation is appended: "*N.B.* Mr. Hume told me that, in correcting his history, he always laboured to reduce superlatives, and soften positives. Have Asia and Africa, from Japan to Morocco, any feeling or memory of the Roman Empire?" P. 2 = 1

On the words "rapid succession of triumphs," note: "Excursion I. *on the succession of Roman triumphs*".

On "bulwarks and boundaries," note: "Incertum metû an per invidiam (Tacit. Annal. i. 11). Why must rational advice be imputed to a base or foolish motive? To what cause, error, malevolence, or flattery shall I ascribe the unworthy alternative? Was the historian dazzled by Trajan's conquests?" P. 3 = 3

"On the immortality and transmigration of soul" (compare P. 6 = 5

footnote). Note: "Julian assigns this Theological cause, of whose power he himself might be conscious (*Cæsares*, p. 327). Yet I am not assured that the religion of Zamolxis subsisted in the time of Trajan; or that his Dacians were the same people with the Getae of Herodotus. The transmigration of the soul has been believed by many nations, warlike as the Celts, or pusillanimous like the Hindoos. When speculative opinion is kindled into practical enthusiasm, its operation will be determined by the praevious character of the man or the nation."

P. 7 = 6 "On their destroyers than on their benefactors." Note: "The first place in the temple of fame is due and is assigned to the successful heroes who had struggled with adversity; who, after signalizing their valour in the deliverance of their country, have displayed their wisdom and virtue in foundation or government of a flourishing state. Such men as Moses, Cyrus, Alfred, Gustavus Vasa, Henry IV. of France, &c."

"The thirst of military glory will ever be the vice of the most exalted [characters . . . but he] lamented with a sigh that his advanced age, &c." All included within the brackets is erased, and the following substituted: "the most exalted minds. Late generations and far distant climates may impute their calamities to the immortal author of the Iliad. The spirit of Alexander was inflamed by the praises of Achilles: and succeeding Heroes have been ambitious to tread in the footsteps of Alexander. Like him the Emperor Trajan aspired to the conquest of the East; but the Roman lamented with a sigh," &c.

P. 11 = 9 "A just preference was given to the climates of the north over those of the south." Note: "The distinction of North and South is real and intelligible; and our pursuit is terminated on either side by the poles of the Earth. But the difference of East and West is arbitrary and shifts round the globe. As the men of the North, not of the West, the

legions of Gaul and Germany were superior to the *South*-Eastern natives of Asia and Egypt. It is the triumph of cold over heat; which may, however, and has been surmounted by moral causes."

"A correspondent number of tribunes and centurions." P. 15 = 12
Note: "The composition of the Roman officers was very faulty. 1. It was late before a Tribune was fixed to each cohort. Six tribunes were chosen for the entire legion which two of them commanded by turns (Polyt. l. vi. p. 526, edit. Schweighaeuser), for the space of two months. 2. One long subordination from the Colonel to the Corporal was unknown. I cannot discover any intermediate ranks between the Tribune and the Centurion, the Centurion and the manipularis or private leginary [*sic*]. 3. As the tribunes were often without experience, the centurions were often without education, mere soldiers of fortune who had risen from the ranks (eo immitior quia toleraverat, Tacit. Annal. i. 20). A body equal to eight or nine of our batallions might be commanded by half a dozen young gentlemen and fifty or sixty old sergeants. Like the legions, our great ships of war may seem ill provided with officers: but in both cases the deficiency is corrected by strong principles of discipline and rigour."

"As in the instance of Horace and Agricola." These words are erased. Note: "quod mihi pareret legio Romana Tribuno (Horat. Serm. l. i. vi. 45), a worthy commander of three and twenty from the school of Athens! Augustus was indulgent to Roman birth, liberis Senatorum . . . militiam. auspicantes non tribunatum modo legionum sed et praefecturas alarum dedit (Sueton. c. 38)." P. 17, footnote 53 = 14, footnote 55

"A league and a half above the surface of the sea." Note: "More correctly, according to Mr. Bouguer, 2500 toises (Buffon, Supplement, tom. v. p. 304). The height of Mont Blanc is now fixed to 2416 toises (Saussure, Voyage dans les Alpes, tom. i. p. 495): but the lowest ground from whence P. 32, footnote 86 = 26, footnote 94

it can be seen is itself greatly elevated above the level of the sea. He who sails by the isle of Teneriff, contemplates the entire Pike, from the foot to the summit."

The moral of the Decline and Fall

But Gibbon has his place in literature not only as the stylist, who never lays aside his toga when he takes up his pen, but as the expounder of a large and striking idea in a sphere of intense interest to mankind, and as a powerful representative of certain tendencies of his age. The guiding idea or "moral" of his history is briefly stated in his epigram: "I have described the triumph of barbarism and religion". In other words, the historical development of human societies, since the second century after Christ, was a retrogression (according to ordinary views of "progress"), for which Christianity was mainly to blame. This conclusion of Gibbon tended in the same direction as the theories of Rousseau; only, while Rousseau dated the decline from the day when men left Arcadia, Gibbon's era was the death of Marcus Aurelius.

Its contribution to the Philosophy of History

We are thus taken into a region of speculation where every traveller must make his own chart. But to attempt to deny a general truth in Gibbon's point of view is vain; and it is feeble to deprecate his sneer. We may spare more sympathy than he for the warriors and the churchmen; but all that has since been added to his knowledge of facts has neither reversed nor blunted the point of the "Decline and Fall". Optimism of temperament may shut the eyes; faith, wedded to some "one increasing purpose" which it shrinks from grasping, may divert from the path of facts. But for an inquirer not blinded by religious prepossessions, or misled by comfortable sophistries, Gibbon really expounded one of the chief data with which the philosophy of history has to reckon. How are we to define progress? how recognize retrogression? What is the end in relation to which such words have their meaning, and is

there a law which will explain "the triumph of barbarism and religion" as a necessary moment in a reasonable process towards that end, whatever it may be? Answers have been given since Gibbon's day, engaging to the intellect, but always making some demand on the faith—answers for which he would have the same smile as for Leo's Dogmatic Epistle. There is certainly some reason for thinking these questions insoluble. We may say at least that the meaning of the philosophy of history is misapprehended until it is recognized that its function is not to solve problems but to transform them.

Gibbon's treatmen of Christianity

But, though the moral of Gibbon's work has not lost its meaning yet, it is otherwise with the particular treatment of Christian theology and Christian institutions. Our point of view has altered, and, if Gibbon were writing now, the tone of his "candid and rational inquiry" would certainly be different. His manner would not be that of sometimes open, sometimes transparently veiled, dislike; he would rather assume an attitude of detachment. He would be affected by that merely historical point of view, which is a note of the present century and its larger tolerances; and more than half disarmed by that wide diffusion of unobtrusive scepticism among educated people, which seems to render offensive warfare superfluous. The man of letters admires the fine edge of subtle sarcasm, wielded by Gibbon with such skill and effect; while the historian is interested in an historical standpoint of the last century. Neither the historian nor the man of letters will any longer subscribe, without a thousand reserves, to the theological chapters of the "Decline and Fall," and no discreet inquirer would go there for his ecclesiastical history. Yet we need not hide the fact that Gibbon's success has in a large measure been due to his scorn for the Church; which, most emphatically expressed in the theological chapters, has, as one might say, spiced his book. The attack of a man,

equipped with erudition, and of perfectly sober judgment, on cherished beliefs and revered institutions, must always excite the interest, by irritating the passions, of men. Gibbon's classical moderation of judgment, his temperate mood, was responsible, as well as foreign education and the influence of French thought, for his attitude to Christianity and to Mahometanism. He hated excess, and the immoderation of the multitude. He could suffer the tolerant piety of a learned abbé or "the fat slumbers of the Church"; but with the religious faith of a fanatical populace or the ardour of its demagogues his reason was unable to sympathize. In the spirit of Cicero or Tacitus he despised the superstitions of the vulgar, and regarded the unmeasured enthusiasm of the early Christians as many sober Churchmen regard the fanaticism of Islam. He dealt out the same measure to the opposite enthusiasm of Julian the Apostate.[2] His work was all the more effective, because he was never dogmatic himself. His irony should not be construed as insincerity, but rather as showing that he was profoundly—one might say, constitutionally—convinced of the truth of that sceptical conclusion which has been, in a different spirit, formulated precisely by the Bishop of Oxford; "there is no room for sweeping denunciations or trenchant criticisms in the dealings of a world whose falsehoods and veracities are separated by so very thin a barrier".

to be partly explained by his temperament

His reasonable scepticism

Thus Gibbon's attitude to religion, while it was conditioned by the intellectual atmosphere of Europe in that age, was also the expression of the man. When Dean Milman spoke of his "bold and disingenuous attack on Christianity,"[3] he made one of those futile charges which it would be impossible to prove and impossible to disprove; such imputa-

Milman's libel

[2] The influence of Gibbon's picture of Julian can be discerned in Ibsen's "Emperor and Galilaean".

[3] In a footnote to the Autobiography.

tions as are characteristic of theologians in the heat of controversy and may be condoned to politicians in the heat of electioneering, but in an historical critic are merely an impertinence.

Ulterior purposes and "party spirit" in the writing of history

It has sometimes been remarked that those histories are most readable which are written to prove a thesis. The indictment of the Empire by Tacitus, the defence of Cæsarianism by Mommsen, Grote's vindication of democracy, Droysen's advocacy of monarchy, might be cited as examples. All these writers intended to present the facts as they took place, but all wrote with prepossessions and opinions, in the light of which they interpreted the events of history. Arnold deliberately advocated such partiality on the ground that "the past is reflected to us by the present and the partyman feels the present most". Another Oxford Regius Professor remarked that "without some infusion of spite it seems as if history could not be written". On the other side stands the formula of Ranke as to the true task of the historian: "Ich will bloss sagen wie es eigentlich gewesen ist". The Greek History of Bishop Thirlwall, the English Constitutional History of Bishop Stubbs himself, were written in this spirit. But the most striking instances perhaps, because they tread with such light feet on the treacherous ashes of more recent history, are Ranke and Bishop Creighton. Thucydides is the most ancient example of this historical reserve. It cannot be said that Gibbon sat down to write with any ulterior purpose, but, as we have seen, he allowed his temperament to colour his history, and used it to prove a congenial thesis. But, while he put things in the light demanded by this thesis, he related his facts accurately. If we take into account the vast range of his work, his accuracy is amazing. He laboured under some disadvantages, which are set forth in his own Memoirs. He had not enjoyed that school and university training in the languages and literatures of Greece and

Arnold's view

Ranke's view

Gibbon's prepossessions and accuracy

Imperfect knowledge of Greek

Rome which is probably the best preparation for historical research. His knowledge of Greek was imperfect; he was very far from having the "scrupulous ear of the well-flogged critic". He has committed errors of translation, and was capable of writing "Gregory of Nazianzen". But such slips are singularly few. Nor is he accustomed to take lightly quotations at second hand; like that famous passage of Eligius of Noyon—held up by Arnold as a warning—which Robertson and Hallam successively copied from Mosheim, where it had appeared in a garbled form, to prove exactly the opposite of its true meaning.

An emendation in Gibbon's text

From one curious inaccuracy, which neither critics nor editors seem to have observed, he must I think be acquitted. In his account of the disturbances in Africa and Egypt in the reign of Diocletian, we meet the following passage (chap. xiii., p. 363):—

> "Julian had assumed the purple at Carthage. Achilleus at Alexandria, and even the Blemmyes, renewed, or rather continued their incursions into the Upper Egypt."

Achilleus arose at this time (295-6 A.D.) as a tyrant at Alexandria; but that he made either at this date or at any previous date an incursion into the Upper Egypt, there is not a trace of evidence in our authorities. I am convinced however that this error was not originally due to the author, but merely a treacherous misprint, which was overlooked by him in correcting the proof sheets, and has also escaped the notice of his editors. By a slight change in punctuation we obtain a perfectly correct statement of the situation:—

> "Julian had assumed the purple at Carthage, Achilleus at Alexandria; and even the Blemmyes renewed, or rather continued, their incursions into the Upper Egypt".

I have no doubts that this was the sentence originally meant and probably written by Gibbon, and have felt no scruple in extirpating the inveterate error from the text.[4]

Gibbon's debt to Tillemont

Gibbon's diligent accuracy in the use of his materials cannot be over-praised, and it will not be diminished by giving the due credit to his French predecessor Tillemont. The *Histoire des Empereurs* and the *Mémoires ecclésiastiques*, laborious and exhaustive collections of material, were addressed to the special student and not to the general reader, but scholars may still consult them with profit. It is interesting to find Mommsen in his later years retracting one of his earlier judgments and reverting to a conclusion of Tillemont. In his recent edition[5] of the Laterculus of Polemius Silvius, he writes thus:—

> "L'auteur de la Notice—peritissimi Tillemontii verba sunt (hist. 5, 699)—vivoit en Occident et ne savoit pas trop l'état où estoit l'Orient; *ei iuvenis contradixi hodie subscribo*".

It is one of Gibbon's merits that he made full use of Tillemont, "whose inimitable accuracy almost assumes the character of genius," as far as Tillemont guided him, up to the reign of Anastasius I.; and it is only just to the mighty work of the Frenchman to impute to him a large share in the accuracy which the Englishman achieved. From the historical, though not from the literary, point of

[4] In some other cases I have corrected the text in this volume. (1). p. 55, n. 109; Sumelpur for Jumelpur, see Appendix 9. (2). p. 259, l. 2 from top; the reading of the received text "public" is surely a printer's error, which escaped detection, for "republic," which I have ventured to restore. (3). p. 279, l. 5 from foot, I have assumed an instance of "lipography". (4). p. 328, n. 35, "Lycius" had been already corrected (see Smith's ed.) to "Lydius". Probably Gibbon had his Zosimus open before him when he wrote this note, and his pen traced Lycius because Lycia happened to occur in the very next line of his authority. I have followed Sir William Smith's precedent in dealing freely with the punctuation, and in modernizing the spelling of a few words.

[5] In the Chronica Minora (M. G. H.), vol. i., 512 *sqq*. See p. 533.

view, Gibbon, deserted by Tillemont, distinctly declines, though he is well sustained through the wars of Justinian by the clear narrative of Procopius.

His necessary limitations

Recognizing that Gibbon was accurate, we do not acknowledge by implication that he was always right; for accuracy is relative to opportunities. The discovery of new materials, the researches of numerous scholars, in the course of a hundred years, have not only added to our knowledge of facts, but have modified and upset conclusions which Gibbon with his materials was justified in drawing. Compare a chapter or two of Mr. Hodgkin's *Italy and her Invaders* with the corresponding episode in Gibbon, and many minor points will appear in which correction has been needful. If Gibbon were alive and writing now, his history would be very different. Affected by the intellectual experiences of the past century he could not adopt quite the same historical attitude; and we should consequently lose the colouring of his brilliant attack on Christianity. Again, he would have found it an absolute necessity to learn what he insolently called that "barbarous idiom," the German language; and this might have affected his style as it would certainly have affected his matter. We dare not deplore Gibbon's limitations, for they were the conditions of his great achievement.

His grasp of the unity of history

Not the least important aspect of the Decline and Fall is its lesson in the unity of history, the favourite theme of Mr. Freeman. The title displays the cardinal fact that the Empire founded by Augustus fell in 1461; that all the changes which transformed the Europe of Marcus Aurelius into the Europe of Erasmus had not abolished the name and memory of the Empire. And whatever names of contempt—in harmony with his thesis—Gibbon might apply to the institution in the period of its later decline, such as the "Lower Empire," or "Greek Empire," his title rectified any false impressions that such language might

cause. On the continuity of the Roman Empire depended the unity of his work. By the emphasis laid on this fact he did the same kind of service to the study of history in England, that Mr. Bryce has done in his *Holy Roman Empire* by tracing the thread which connects the Europe of Francis the Second with the Europe of Charles the Great.

Gibbon read widely, and had a large general knowledge of history, which supplied him with many happy illustrations. It is worth pointing out that the gap in his knowledge of ancient history was the period of the Diadochi and Epigoni. If he had been familiar with that period, he would not have said that Diocletian was the first to give to the world the example of a resignation of sovereignty. He would have referred to the conspicuous case of Ptolemy Soter; Mr. Freeman would have added Lydiadas, the tyrant of Megalopolis. Of the earlier example of Asarhaddon Gibbon could not have known.

New method of research

To pass from scope and spirit to method, Gibbon's historical sense kept him constantly right in dealing with his sources, but he can hardly be said to have treated them methodically. The growth of German erudition is one of the leading features of the intellectual history of the nineteenth century; and one of its most important contributions to historical method lies in the investigation of sources. German scholars have indeed pressed this "Quellenkunde" further than it can safely be pressed. A philologist, writing his doctoral dissertation, will bring plausible reasons to prove where exactly Diodorus ceased to "write out" Ephorus, whose work we do not possess, and began to write out somebody else, whose work is also lost to us. But, though the method lends itself to the multiplication of vain subtleties, it is absolutely indispensable for scientific historiography. It is in fact part of the science of evidence. The distinction of primary and derivative authorities might be used as a test.

"Quellenkritik"

The untrained historian fails to recognize that nothing is added to the value of a statement of Widukind by its repetition by Thietmar or Ekkehard, and that a record in the Continuation of Theophanes gains no further credibility from the fact that it likewise occurs in Cedrenus, Zonaras or Glycas.

While evidence is more systematically arranged, greater care is bestowed on sifting and probing what our authorities say, and in distinguishing contemporary from later witnesses. Not a few important results have been derived from such methods; they enable us to trace the growth of stories. The evidence against Faustina shrinks into nothing; the existence of Pope Joan is exploded. It is irrelevant to condemn a statement of Zonaras as made by a "modern Greek". The question is, where did he get it?[6]

The difficult questions connected with the authorship and compilation of the Historia Augusta have produced a chestful of German pamphlets, but they did not trouble Gibbon. The relationships of the later Greek chronicles and histories are more difficult and intricate even than the questions raised by the Historia Augusta, but he did not even formulate a prudent interrogation. Ferdinand Hirsch, twenty years ago, cleared new roads through this forest, in which George the Monk and the Logothete who continued him, Leo Grammaticus and Simeon Magister, John Scylitzes, George Cedrenus and Zonaras lived in promiscuous obscurity. Büttner-Wobst on one side, C. de Boor on the other, have been working effectually on the same lines, clearing up the haze which surrounds George the Monk—the time has gone by for calling him George Hamartolus. Another formidable problem, that of John Malalas—with his namesake John of

[6] Gibbon had a notion of this, but did not apply it methodically. See in this vol., p. 415, note 59: "but those modern Greeks had the opportunity of consulting many writers which have since been lost". And see, in general, his Preface to the fourth volume of the quarto ed.

Antioch, so hard to catch,—having been grappled with by Jeep, Sotiriadês and others, is now being more effectively treated by Patzig.

Example of use of untrustworthy sources

Criticism, too, has rejected some sources from which Gibbon drew without suspicion. In the interest of literature we may perhaps be glad that like Ockley he used with confidence the now discredited Al Wakidi. Before such maintained perfection of manner, to choose is hard; but the chapters on the origin of Mahometanism and its first triumphs against the Empire would alone be enough to win perpetual literary fame. Without Al Wakidi's romance they would not have been written; and the historian, compelled to regard Gibbon's description as he would a Life of Charles the Great based on the monk of St. Gall, must refer the inquirer after facts to Sprenger's Life of Mahomet and Weil's History of the Caliphs.[7]

Error of blending sources of different periods

In connexion with the use of materials, reference may be made to a mode of proceeding which Gibbon has sometimes adopted and which modern method condemns. It is not legitimate to blend the evidence of two different periods in order to paint a complete picture of an institution. Great caution, for example, is needed in using the Greek epics, of which the earliest and latest parts differ by a long interval, for the purpose of pourtraying a so-called Homeric or heroic age. A notice of Fredegarius will not be necessarily applicable to the age of the sons and grandsons of Chlodwig, and a custom which was familiar to Gregory or Venantius

[7] In Mahometan history in general, it may be added, not only has advance been made by access to new literary oriental documents, but its foundations have been more surely grounded by numismatic researches, especially those of Mr. Stanley Lane-Poole. This scholar's recently published handbook containing tables and lists of the "Mohammadan" Dynasties is a guerdon for which students of history must be most deeply grateful. The special histories of Mahometan Sicily and Spain have been worked out by Amari and Dozy. For the Mongols we have the overwhelming results of Sir Henry Howorth's learning and devotion to his "vasty" subject.

may have become obsolete before the days of the last Merwings. It is instructive to compare Gibbon's description of the social and political institutions of our Teutonic forefathers with that of Bishop Stubbs. Gibbon blends together with dexterity the evidence of Cæsar and Tacitus, between whom a century had elapsed, and composes a single picture; whereas Bishop Stubbs keeps the statements of the two Romans carefully apart, and by comparing them is able to show that in certain respects the Germans had developed in the interval. Gibbon's account of the military establishment of the Empire, in the first chapter of his work, is open to a like objection. He has blended, without due criticism, the evidence of Vegetius with that of earlier writers.[8]

Progress of textual criticism

In the study of sources, then, our advance has been great, while the labours of an historian have become more arduous. It leads us to another advance of the highest importance. To use historical documents with confidence, an assurance that the words of the writer have been correctly transmitted is manifestly indispensable. It generally happens that our texts have come down in several MSS., of different ages, and there are often various discrepancies. We have then to determine the relations of the MSS. to each other and their comparative values. To the pure philologist this is part of the alphabet of his profession; but the pure historian takes time to realize it, and it was not realized in the age of Gibbon as it is to-day. Nothing forces upon the historian the necessity of having a sound text so impressively as the process of comparing different documents in order to determine whether one was dependent on another,—the process of investigating sources.

[8] It may be said for Gibbon, however, that even Mommsen, in his volume on the Provinces, has adopted this practice of blending evidence of different dates. For the historical artist, it is very tempting, when the evidence for any particular period is scanty; but in the eyes of the scientific historian it is indefensible.

In this respect we have now to be thankful for many blessings denied to Gibbon and—so recent is our progress—denied to Milman and Finlay. We have Mommsen's editions of Jordanes and the Variae of Cassiodorius, his Chronica Minora (still incomplete), including, for instance, Idatius, the Prospers, Count Marcellinus; we have Peter's Historia Augusta, Gardthausen's Ammianus, Luetjohann's Sidonius Apollinaris; Du Chesne's *Liber Pontificalis*; and a large number of critical texts of ecclesiastical writers might be mentioned.[9] The Greek historians have been less fortunate. The Bonn edition of the "Byzantine Writers," issued under the auspices of Niebuhr and Bekker in the early part of this century, was the most lamentably feeble production ever given to the world by German scholars of great reputation. It marked no advance on the older folio edition, except that it was cheaper, and that one or two new documents were included. But there is now a reasonable prospect that we shall by degrees have a complete series of trustworthy texts. De Boor showed the way by his splendid edition of Theophanes and his smaller texts of Theophylactus Simocatta and the Patriarch Nicephorus. Mendelssohn's Zosimus, and Reifferscheid's Anna Comnena stand beside them. Haury promises a Procopius, and we are expecting from Seger a long desired John Scylitzes, the greater part of whose text, though existing in a MS. at Paris, has never been printed and can only be inferred by a comparison of the Latin translation of Gabius with the chronicle of Cedrenus who copied him with faithful servility.

Improved Latin texts

Defective and improved Greek texts

The legendary Lives of the Saints

The legends of the Saints, though properly outside the domain of the historian proper, often supply him with valuable help. For "Culturgeschichte" they are a direct source. Finlay observed that the Acta Sanctorum contain an un-

[9] Especially the Corpus Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum.

explored mine for the social life of the Eastern Empire. But before they can be confidently dealt with, trained criticism must do its will on the texts; the relations between the various versions of each legend must be defined and the tradition in each case made clear. The task is huge; the libraries of Europe and Hither Asia are full of these holy tales. But Usener has made a good beginning and Krumbacher has rendered the immense service of pointing out precisely what the problems are.[10]

New Material. Examples: (1) Numismatics

Besides improved methods of dealing with the old material, much new material of various kinds has been discovered, since the work of Gibbon. To take one department, our coins have increased in number. It seems a pity that he who worked at his Spanheim with such diligence was not able to make use of Eckhel's great work on Imperial coinage which began to appear in 1792 and was completed in 1798. Since then we have had Cohen, and the special works of Saulcy and Sabatier. M. Schlumberger's splendid study of Byzantine sigillography must be mentioned in the same connexion.[11]

Seals

(2) Constitutional history

The constitution and history of the Principate, and the provincial government of the early Emperors, have been

[10] Usener, Der heilige Theodosios, 1890. Krumbacher, Studien zu den Legenden des heiligen Theodosios, 1892. It is worth while to state briefly what the chief problem is. The legends of the Saints were collected, rehandled, cleansed of casual heresy, and put into literary form in the tenth century (towards its close according to Vasilievski) by Symeon Metaphrastes. Most of our MSS. are derived from the edition of Symeon; but there are also extant, some, comparatively few, containing the original pre-Symeonic versions, which formed the chief literary recreation of ordinary men and women before the tenth century. The problem is to collect the materials for a critical edition of as many legends as have been preserved in their original form. When that is done, we shall have the data for fully appreciating the methods of Symeon. As for the text Krumbacher points out that what we want is a thoroughgoing study of the *Grammar of the MSS.*

[11] M. Schlumberger followed up this work by an admirable monograph on Nicephorus Phocas, luxuriously illustrated; and we are looking forward to the appearance of a companion work on Basil II.

placed on an entirely new basis by Mommsen and his school.[12] The Römisches Staatsrecht is a fabric for whose rearing was needed not only improved scholarship but an extensive collection of epigraphic material. The Corpus of Latin Inscriptions is the keystone of the work. Epigraphy

Hence Gibbon's first chapters are somewhat "out of date". But on the other hand his admirable description of the change from the Principate to absolute Monarchy, and the system of Diocletian and Constantine, is still most valuable. Here inscriptions are less illustrative, and he disposed of much the same material as we, especially the Codex Theodosianus. New light is badly wanted, and has not been to any extent forthcoming, on the respective contributions of Diocletian and Constantine to the organization of the new monarchy. As to the arrangement of the provinces we have indeed a precious document in the Verona List (published by Mommsen), which, dating from 297 A.D., shows Diocletian's reorganization. The modifications which were made between this year and the beginning of the fifth century when the Notitia Dignitatum was drawn up, can be largely determined not only by lists in Rufus and Ammianus, but, as far as the eastern provinces are concerned, by the Laterculus of Polemius Silvius. Thus, partly by critical method applied to Polemius, partly by the discovery of a new document, we are enabled to rectify the list of Gibbon, who adopted the simple plan of ascribing to Diocletian and Constantine the detailed organization of the Notitia. Otherwise our knowledge of the changes of Diocletian has not been greatly augmented; but our clearer conception of the Principate and its steady development towards pure monarchy has reflected Verona List o. Provinces

[12] The first volume of Mr. Pelham's history of the Empire, which is expected shortly, will show, when compared with Merivale, how completely our knowledge of Roman institutions has been transformed within a very recent period.

light on Diocletian's system; and the tendencies of the third century, though still obscure at many points, have been made more distinct. The year of the Gordians is still as great a puzzle as ever; but the dates of Alexandrine coins with the tribunician years give us here, as elsewhere, limits of which Gibbon was ignorant. While speaking of the third century, I may add that Calpurnius Siculus, whom Gibbon claimed as a contemporary of Carinus, has been restored by modern criticism to the reign of Nero, and this error has vitiated some of Gibbon's pages.

The constitutional history of the Empire from Diocletian forward has still to be written systematically. Some noteworthy contributions to this subject have been made by Russian scholars.

(3) Law

Gibbon's forty-first chapter is still not only famous, but admired by jurists as a brief and brilliant exposition of the principles of Roman law. To say that it is worthy of the subject is the best tribute that can be paid to it. A series of foreign scholars of acute legal ability has elaborated the study of the science in the present century; I need only refer to such names as Savigny and Jhering. A critical edition of the Corpus juris Romani by Mommsen himself has been one of the chief contributions. The manuscript of Gaius is the new discovery to be recorded; and we can imagine with what interest Gibbon, were he restored to earth, would compare in Gneist's parallel columns the Institutions with the elder treatise.

Gaius

But whoever takes up Gibbon's theme now will not be content with an exposition of the Justinianean Law. He must go on to its later development in the subsequent centuries, in the company of Zachariä von Lingenthal and Heimbach. Such a study has been made possible and comparatively easy by the magnificent works of Zachariä; among whose achievements I may single out his restoration of

Græco-Roman law

Ecloga

the Ecloga, which used to be ascribed to Leo VI., to its true author Leo III.; a discovery which illuminated in a most welcome manner the Isaurian reformation. It is interesting to observe that the last work which engaged him even on his death-bed was an attempt to prove exactly the same thing for the military treatise known as the Tactics of Leo VI. Here too Zachariä thinks that Leo was the Isaurian, while the received view is that he was the "Philosopher".

Having illustrated by examples the advantages open to an historian of the present day, which were not open to Gibbon, for dealing with Gibbon's theme,—improved and refined methods, a closer union of philology with history, and ampler material—we may go on to consider a general defect in his treatment of the Later Empire, and here too exhibit, by a few instances, progress made in particular departments.

Gibbon's treatment of the Later Empire

Gibbon ended the first half of his work with the so-called fall of the Western Empire in 476 A.D.—a date which has been fixed out of regard for Italy and Rome, and should strictly be 480 A.D. in consideration of Julius Nepos. Thus the same space is devoted to the first three hundred years which is allowed to the remaining nine hundred and eighty. Nor does the inequality end here. More than a quarter of the second half of the work deals with the first two of these ten centuries. The mere statement of the fact shows that the history of the Empire from Heraclius to the last Grand Comnenus of Trebizond is merely a sketch with certain episodes more fully treated. The personal history and domestic policy of all the Emperors, from the son of Heraclius to Isaac Angelus, are compressed into one chapter. This mode of dealing with the subject is in harmony with the author's contemptuous attitude to the "Byzantine" or "Lower" Empire.

False impression as to uniformity of its history

But Gibbon's account of the internal history of the Empire after Heraclius is not only superficial; it gives an

entirely false impression of the facts. If the materials had been then as well sifted and studied as they are even to-day, he could not have failed to see that beneath the intrigues and crimes of the Palace there were deeper causes at work, and beyond the revolutions of the Capital City wider issues implied. The cause for which the Iconoclasts contended involved far more than an ecclesiastical rule or usage; it meant, and they realized, the regeneration of the Empire. Or, to take another instance: the key to the history of the tenth and eleventh centuries, is the struggle between the Imperial throne and the great landed interest of Asia Minor;[13] the accession of Alexius Commenus marked the final victory of the latter. Nor had Gibbon any conception of the great ability of most of the Emperors from Leo the Isaurian to Basil II., or, we might say, to Constantine the conqueror of Armenia. The designation of the story of the later Empire as a "uniform tale of weakness and misery"[14] is one of the most untrue, and most effective, judgments ever uttered by a thoughtful historian. Before the outrage of 1204, the Empire was the bulwark of the West.[15]

and as to its weakness

Reaction

Against Gibbon's point of view there has been a gradual reaction which may be said to have culminated within the last ten years. It was begun by Finlay, whose unprosperous speculations in Greece after the Revolution prompted him to seek for the causes of the insecurity of investments in land, and, leading him back to the year 146 B.C., involved him in

Finlay's History

[13] This has been best pointed out by C. Neumann.

[14] Chap. xlviii. *ad init.*, where a full statement of his view of the later Empire will be found.

[15] I need not repeat here what I have said elsewhere, and what many others have said (recently Mr. Frederic Harrison in two essays in his volume entitled *The Meaning of History*) as to the various services of the Empire to Europe. They are beginning to be generally recognized and they have been brought out in Mr. C. W. Oman's brief and skilful sketch of the "Byzantine Empire" (1892).

a history of the "Byzantine Empire" which embedded a history of Greece.[16] The great value of Finlay's work lies not only in its impartiality and in his trained discernment of the commercial and financial facts underlying the superficial history of the chronicles, but in its full and trustworthy narration of the events. By the time that Mr. Tozer's edition appeared in 1876, it was being recognized that Gibbon's word on the later Empire was not the last. Meanwhile Hertzberg was going over the ground in Germany, and Gfrörer, whose ecclesiastical studies had taken him into those regions, had written a good deal of various value. Hirsch's *Byzantinische Studien* had just appeared, and Rambaud's *l'Empire grec au x^me siècle*. M. Sathas was bringing out his Bibliotheca Græca medii aevi—including two volumes of Psellus—and was beginning his Documents inédits. Professor Lambros was working at his Athens in the Twelfth Century and preparing his editio princeps of the great Archbishop Akominatos. Hopf had collected a mass of new materials from the archives of southern cities. In England, Freeman was pointing out the true position of New Rome and her Emperors in the history of Europe.

Other researches

These tendencies have increased in volume and velocity within the last twenty years. They may be said to have reached their culminating point in the publication of Professor Krumbacher's History of Byzantine Literature.[17] The importance of this work, of vast scope and extraordinary accuracy, can only be fully understood by the specialist. It has already promoted and facilitated the progress of the study in an incalculable measure; and it was soon followed by the inaugura-

Krumbacher

[16] Since then a Greek scholar, K. Paparrigopulos, has covered the whole history of Greece from the earliest times to the present century, in his Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἔθνους. The same gigantic task, but in a more popular form, has been undertaken and begun by Professor Lambros, but is not yet finished.

[17] Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur (565-1453), 1891.

tion of a journal, entirely devoted to works on "Byzantine" subjects, by the same scholar. The *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* would have been impossible twenty-five years ago and nothing shows more surely the turn of the tide. Professor Krumbacher's work seems likely to form as important an epoch as that of Ducange.

Russian school of Byzantine students

Meanwhile in a part of Europe which deems itself to have received the torch from the Emperors as it has received their torch from the Patriarchs, and which has always had a special regard for the city of Constantine, some excellent work was being done. In Russia, Muralt edited the chronicle of George the monk and his Continuers, and compiled Byzantine Fasti. The Journal of the Ministry of Public Instruction is the storehouse of a long series of most valuable articles dealing, from various sides, with the history of the later Empire, by those indefatigable workers Uspenski and Vasilievski. At length, in 1894, Krumbacher's lead has been followed, and the *Vizantiski Vremennik*, a Russian counterpart of the *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, has been started under the joint editorship of Vasilievski and Regel, and is clearly destined, with the help of Veselovski, Kondakov, Bieliaiev and the rest of a goodly fellowship, to make its mark.

Progress of research since Gibbon Examples:

After this general sketch of the new prospects of later Imperial history, it will be useful to show by some examples what sort of progress is being made, and what kind of work has to be done. I will first take some special points of interest connected with Justinian. My second example shall be the topography of Constantinople; and my third the large field of literature composed in colloquial Greek. Lastly, the capital defect of the second half of Gibbon's work, his inadequate treatment, or rather his neglect, of the Slavs, wil serve to illustrate our historical progress.

(1) Justinian. (a) Procopius and the Secret History

New light has been cast, from more than one side, on the reign of Justinian where there are so many uncertain and interesting places. The first step that methodical history had to take was a thoroughgoing criticism of Procopius, and this was more than half done by Dahn in his elaborate monograph. The double problem of the "Secret History" has stimulated the curiosity of the historian and the critic. Was Procopius the author? and in any case, are the statements credible? Gibbon has inserted in his notes the worst bits of the scandals which far outdid the convivium quinquaginta meretricum described by Burchard, or the feast of Sophonius Tigellinus; and he did not hesitate to believe them. Their credibility is now generally questioned, but the historian of Cæsarea is a much more interesting figure if it can be shown that he was the author. From a careful comparison of the Secret History with the works of Procopian authorship, in point of style, Dahn concluded that Procopius wrote it. Ranke argued against this view and maintained that it was the work of a malcontent who had obtained possession of a private diary of Procopius, on which framework he constructed the scandalous chronicle, imitating successfully the Procopian style.[18]

The discovery of Haury

The question has been placed on a new footing by Haury;[19] and it is very interesting to find that the solution depends on the right determination of certain dates. The result is briefly as follows:—

Procopius was a malcontent who hated Justinian and all his works. He set himself the task of writing a history of his time, which, as the secretary of Belisarius, he had good opportunities of observing. He composed a narrative of the military events, in which he abstained from committing

[18] I was seduced by this hypothesis of Ranke (Later Roman Empire, i. 363), but no longer believe in it.

[19] Procopiana, 1891.

himself, so that it could be safely published in his own lifetime. Even here his critical attitude to the government is sometimes clear. He allows it to be read between the lines that he regarded the reconquest of Africa and Italy as calamities for those countries; which thus came under an oppressor, to be stripped by his governors and tax gatherers. But the domestic administration was more dangerous ground, on which Procopius could not tread without raising a voice of bitter indignation and hatred. So he dealt with this in a book which was to be kept secret during his own life and bequeathed to friends who might be trusted to give it to the world at a suitable time. The greater part of the Military History, which treated in seven Books the Persian, Vandalic, and Gothic wars, was finished in 545 A.D., and perhaps read to a select circle of friends; at a later time some additions were made, but no changes in what had been already written. The Secret History, as Haury has proved from internal evidence, was written in 550.[20] About three years later the Military History received an eighth Book, bringing the story down to the end of the Gothic war. Then the work came under the notice of Justinian, who saw that a great historian had arisen; and Procopius, who had certainly not described the wars for the purpose of pleasing the Emperor, but had sailed as close to the wind as he dared, was called upon to undertake the disagreeable task of lauding the oppressor. An Imperial command was clearly the origin of the De Aedificiis (560 A.D.), in which the reluctant writer adopted the plan of making adulation so fulsome, that, except to Justinian's vanity, he might appear to be laughing in his

[20] One of the author's points is that Justinian was the real ruler during the nominal reign of Justin, who was an "ass". Hence he dates Justinian's administration (not of course his Imperial years) from 518. The consequence of this important discovery of Haury, which he has proved up to the hilt, is that the work was written in 550 (not, as before believed, in 559)—the thirty-second year of Justinian's administration.

sleeve. At the very beginning of the treatise he has a sly allusion to the explosives which were lying in his desk, unknown to the Imperial spies.

Such is the outline of the literary motives of Procopius as we must conceive them, now that we have a practical certainty that he, and no other, wrote the Secret History. For Haury's dates enable us, as he points out, to argue as follows: If Procopius did not write the book, it was obviously written by a forger, who wished it to pass as a Procopian work. But in 550 no forger could have had the close acquaintance with the Military History which is exhibited by the author of the Anecdota. And moreover the identity of the introduction of the eighth Book of the Military History with that of the Secret History, which was urged by Ranke as an objection to the genuineness of the latter work, now tells decisively in favour of it. For if Procopius composed it in 553, how could a forger, writing in 550, have anticipated it? And if the forger composed it in 550, how are we to explain its appearances in a later work of Procopius himself? These considerations put it beyond all reasonable doubt that Procopius was the author of the Secret History; for this assumption is the only one which supplies an intelligible explanation of the facts.

(b) Theophilus' Life of Justinian

Another puzzle in connexion with Justinian lay in certain biographical details relating to that emperor and his family, which Alemanni, in his commentary on the Secret History, quoted on the authority of a Life of Justinian by a certain Abbot Theophilus, said to have been the Emperor's preceptor. Of these biographical notices, and of Justinian's preceptor Theophilus, we otherwise knew nothing; nor had any one, since Alemanni, seen the Biography. Gibbon and other historians accepted without question the statements quoted by Alemanni; though it would have been wiser to treat them with more reserve, until some data for criticizing them

were discovered. The puzzle of Alemanni's source, the
The discovery of Mr. Bryce
Life of Theophilus, was solved by Mr. Bryce, who discovered in the library of the Barbarini palace at Rome the original text from which Alemanni drew his information.[21] It professes to be an extract from a Slavonic work, containing the Life of Justinian up to the thirtieth year of his reign, composed by Bogomil, abbot of the monastery of St. Alexander in Dardania. This extract was translated by Marnavich, Canon of Sebenico (afterwards Bishop of Bosnia, 1631-1639), a friend of Alemanni, and some notes were appended by the same scholar. *Bogomil* is the Slavonic equivalent of the Greek *Theophilus*, which was accordingly adopted by Alemanni in his references. Mr. Bryce has shown clearly that this document, interesting as it is in illustrating how Slavonic legends had grown up round the name of Justinian, is worthless as history, and that there is no reason to suppose that such a person as the Dardanian Bogomil ever existed. We are indeed met by a new problem, which, however, is of no serious concern to the practical purposes of history. How did Marnavich obtain a copy of the original Life, from which he made the extract, and which he declares to be preserved in the library of the monks who profess the rule of St. Basil on Mount Athos? Does the original still exist, on Mount Athos or elsewhere? or did it ever exist?

The wars of Justinian[22] in the west have been fully and admirably related by Mr. Hodgkin, with the exception of the obscure conquest of Spain, on which there is too little to be said and nothing further seems likely to come to light. In regard to the ecclesiastical policy of Justinian there is still a field for research.

[21] The Life of Justinian by Theophilus, in the *English Historical Review*. Vasil'ev has given an account of Mr. Bryce's article in the *Vizantiski Vremennik*, i., 469 *sqq*.

[22] The Persian and Lazic Wars have been related in detail in my Later Roman Empire, vol. i.

(c) Sancta Sophia, and Byzantine art

As for the study of the great work of Anthemius, which brings us to the general subject of Byzantine art, much has been done within the last half century. Gibbon had nothing to help him for the buildings of Constantinople that could compare with Adam's splendid work which he consulted for the buildings of Spalato. We have now Salzenberg's luxurious work, *Alt-christliche Baudenkmale von Constantinopel*, published just fifty years ago by the Prussian government, with plates which enable us to make a full study of the architecture of St. Sophia. A few months ago a complete and scholarly English study of this church by Messrs. Lethaby and Swainson appeared. Other churches, too, especially those at Ravenna, have received careful attention ; De Vogüé's admirable work on the architecture of Syria is well known ; but Strzygovski has only too good reason for complaining that the study of Byzantine architecture, as a whole, has not yet properly begun. A large work on the churches of Greece, which two English scholars are preparing, ought to do much to further the cause which Strzygovski has at heart, and to which he has made valuable contributions himself.[23] More progress is perhaps being made in the study of miniature painting and iconography ; and in this field the work of the Russian student Kondakov is the most noteworthy.

(2) The topography of Constantinople

The study of works of architecture in ancient cities, like Athens, Rome, or Constantinople, naturally entails a study of the topography of the town ; and in the case of Constantinople this study is equally important for the historian. Little progress of a satisfactory kind can be made until either Constantinople passes under a European government, or a complete change comes over the spirit of Turkish administration. The region of the Imperial Palace and the ground

[23] His new work on the reservoirs of Constantinople may be specially mentioned.

between the Hippodrome and St. Sophia must be excavated before certainty on the main points can be attained. Labarte's *a priori* reconstruction of the plan of the palace, on the basis of the Cerimonies of Constantine Porphyrogennetos and scattered notices in other Greek writers, was wonderfully ingenious and a certain part of it is manifestly right, though there is much which is not borne out by a more careful examination of the sources. The next step was taken by a Russian scholar Bieliaiev who has recently published a most valuable study on the Cerimonies,[24] in which he has tested the reconstruction of Labarte and shown us exactly where we are,—what we know, and what with our present materials we cannot possibly know. Between Labarte and Bieliaiev the whole problem was obscured by the unscholarly work of Paspatês, the Greek antiquarian; whose sole merit was that he kept the subject before the world. As the acropolis is the scene of so many great events in the history which Gibbon recorded, it is well to warn the reader that our sources make it absolutely certain that the Hippodrome adjoined the Palace; there was no public space between them. The Augusteum did not lie, as Paspatês asserted, between the Palace and the Hippodrome,[25] but between the north side of the Hippodrome and St. Sophia.

Bieliaiev

[24] Byzantina. Ocherki, materialy, i zamietki po Vizantiskim drevnostiam, 1891-3. I must not omit to mention Dr. Mordtmann's valuable Esquisse topographique (1892), and N. Destunis has made noteworthy contributions to the subject.

[25] With blameworthy indiscretion I accepted this false view of Paspatês, in my Later Roman Empire, without having gone methodically into the sources. I was misled by the fame won by the supposed "topographical discoveries" of this diligent antiquarian and by his undeservedly high reputation; this, however, is no excuse, and unfortunately the error has vitiated my account of the Nika revolt. I have gone into the theory of Paspatês in the *Scottish Review* (April, 1894), where he is treated too leniently. His misuse of authorities is simply astounding. I may take the opportunity of saying that I hope to rewrite the two volumes of my Later Roman Empire and correct, so far as I may be able, its many faults. A third volume, dealing with the ninth century, will, I hope, appear at a not too distant date.

On the trades and industries of the Imperial City, on the trade corporations and the minute control exercised over them by the government, new light has been thrown by M. Nicole's discovery and publication of the Prefect's Book, a code of regulations drawn up by Leo VI. The *demes* of Constantinople are a subject which needs investigation. They are certainly not to be regarded as Gibbon and his successors have regarded them, as mere circus parties. They must represent, as Uspenski points out in the opening number of the new *Vizantiski Vremennik*, organized divisions of the population.

The Book of the Prefect

A field in which the historian must wander to breathe the spirit and learn the manner of the mediæval Greek world is that of the romance, both prose and verse, written in the vulgar tongue. This field was closed to Gibbon, but the labours of many scholars, above all Legrand, have rendered it now easily accessible. Out of a large number of interesting things I may refer especially to two. One is the epic of Digenes Akritas, the Roland or Cid of the Later Empire, a poem of the tenth century, which illustrates the life of Armatoli and the border warfare against the Saracens in the Cilician mountains. The other is the Book of the Conquest of the Morea,[26] a mixture of fiction and fact, but invaluable for realizing the fascinating though complicated history of the "Latin" settlements in Greece. That history was set aside by Gibbon, with the phrase, "I shall not pursue the obscure and various dynasties that rose and fell on the continent or in the isles," though he deigns to give a page or two to Athens.[27] But it is a subject with unusual possibilities

(3) "Vulgärgriechische Litteratur"

Digenes Akritas

The Chronicle of Morea

History of Greece after the Latin Conquest

[26] The Greek and the French versions were published by Buchon, uncritically. A new edition of the Greek text is promised by Dr. John Schmitt.

[27] The history of mediæval Athens has been recorded at length in an attractive work by Gregorovius, the counterpart of his great history of mediæval Rome.

for picturesque treatment, and out of which, Gibbon, if he had apprehended the opportunity, and had possessed the materials, would have made a brilliant chapter. Since Finlay, who entered into this episode of Greek history with great fulness, the material has been largely increased by the researches of Hopf.[28]

(4) The Slavs and their relations with the Later Empire

As I have already observed, it is perhaps on the Slavonic side of the history of the Empire that Gibbon is most conspicuously inadequate. Since he wrote, various causes have combined to increase our knowledge of Slavonic antiquity. The Slavs themselves have engaged in methodical investigation of their own past; and, since the entire or partial emancipations of the southern Slavs from Asiatic rule, a general interest in Slavonic things has grown up throughout Europe. Gibbon dismissed the history of the First Bulgarian Kingdom, from its foundation in the reign of Constantine Pogonatus to its overthrow by the second Basil, in two pages. To-day the author of a history of the Empire on the same scale would find two hundred a strict limit. Gibbon tells us nothing of the Slavonic missionaries, Cyril and Methodius, round whose names an extensive literature has been formed. It is only in recent years that the geography of the Illyrian peninsula has become an accessible subject of study.

Useful controversies:

The investigation of the history of the northern peoples who came under the influence of the Empire has been stimulated by controversy, and controversy has been animated and even embittered by national pride. The question of Slavonic settlements in Greece has been thoroughly ventilated,

(1) Slavs in Greece

[28] For a full account of Vulgär-griechische Litteratur, I may refer to Krumbacher's Gesch. der Byz. Litt. Here it is unnecessary to do more than indicate its existence and importance. I may add that the historian cannot neglect the development of the language, for which these romances (and other documents) furnish ample data. Here the Greeks themselves have an advantage, and scholars like Hatzidakês, Psicharês, and Jannarês are in this field doing work of the best kind.

because Fallmerayer excited the scholarship of Hellenes and Philhellenes to refute what they regarded as an insulting paradox.[29] So, too, the pride of the Roumanians was irritated by Roesler, who denied that they were descended from the inhabitants of Trajan's Dacia and described them as later immigrants of the thirteenth century. Pič arose against him; then Hermuzaki argued for an intermediate date. The best Hungarian scholar of the day joined the fray, on the other side; and the contention became bitter between Vlach and Magyar, the Roumanian pretensions to Siebenbürgen—"Dacia irredenta"—sharpening the lances of the foes. The Roumanians have not come out of their "question" as well as the Hellenes. Hungary too has its own question. Are the Magyars to be ethnically associated with the Finns or given over to the family of the Turks, whom as champions of Christendom they had opposed at Mohácz and Varna? It was a matter of pride for the Hungarian to detach himself from the Turk; and the evidence is certainly on his side. Hunfalvy's conclusions have successfully defied the assaults of Vámbéry.[30] Again in Russia there has been a long and vigorous contest,—the so-called Norman or Varangian question. No doubt is felt now by the impartial judge as to the Scandinavian origin of the princes of Kiev, and that the making of Russia was due to Northmen or Varangians. Kunik and Pogodin were reinforced by Thomsen of Denmark; and the pure Slavism of Ilovaiski[31]

(2) Origin of the Roumanians

(3) Ugro-Finnic or Turkish origin of the Hungarians

(4) Origin of the Russian state; Normannic question

[29] Fallmerayer's thesis that there was no pure Hellenic blood in Greece was triumphantly refuted. No one denies that there was a large Slavonic element in the country parts, especially of the Peloponnesus.

[30] In a paper entitled, The Coming of the Hungarians, in the *Scottish Review* of July, 1892, I have discussed the questions connected with early Magyar history, and criticized Hunfalvy's Magyarország Ethnographiája (1876) and Vámbéry's A magyarok eredete (1882). One of the best works dealing with the subject has been written by a Slav (C. Grot).

[31] Ilovaiski's work Istorija Rossii, vol. i. (Kiev period), is, though his main thesis is a mistake, most instructive.

and Gedeonov, though its champions were certainly able, is a lost cause.

Progress in Slavonic archæology and history

From such collisions sparks have flown and illuminated dark corners. For the Slavs the road was first cleared by Šafarik. The development of the comparative philology of the Indo-Germanic tongues has had its effect; the Slavonic languages have been brought into line, chiefly by the life-work of Miklosich; and the science is being developed by such scholars as Jagič and Leskien. The several countries of the Balkan lands have their archæologists and archæological journals; and the difficulty which now meets the historian is not the absence but the plenitude of philological and historical literature.

The early history of the Magyars

A word may be added about the Hungarians, who have not been so successful with their early history as the Slavs. Until the appearance of Hunfalvy, their methods were ante-diluvian, and their temper credulous. The special work of Jászay, and the first chapters of Szalay's great History of Hungary, showed no advance on Katóna and Pray, who were consulted by Gibbon. All believed in the Anonymous Scribe of King Béla; Jászay simply transcribed him. Then Roesler came and dispelled the illusion. Our main sources now are Constantine Porphyrogennetos, and the earlier Asiatic traveller Ibn Dasta, who has been rendered accessible by Chwolson.[32] The linguistic researches of Ahlquist, Hunfalvy and others into Vogul, Ostjak and the rest of the Ugro-Finnic kindred, must be taken into account by the critic who is dealing with those main sources. The Chazars, to whom the Hungarians were once subject, the Patzinaks, who drove the Magyars from "Lebedia" to "Atelkuzu" and

[32] Chwolson, Izviestiia o Chozarach, Burtasach, Bolgarach, Madiarach, Slavaniach, i Rusach.

from "Atelkuzu" to Pannonia, and other peoples of the same kind, have profited by these investigations.

The foregoing instances will serve to give a general idea of the respects in which Gibbon's history might be described as behind date. To follow out all the highways and byways of progress would mean the usurpation of at least a volume by the editor. What more has to be said, must be said briefly in notes and appendices. That Gibbon is behind date in many details, and in some departments of importance, simply signifies that we and our fathers have not lived in an absolutely incompetent world. But in the main things he is still our master, above and beyond "date". It is needless to dwell on the obvious qualities which secure to him immunity from the common lot of historical writers,—such as the bold and certain measure of his progress through the ages; his accurate vision, and his tact in managing perspective; his discreet reserves of judgment and timely scepticism; the immortal affectation of his unique manner. By virtue of these superiorities he can defy the danger with which the activity of successors must always threaten the worthies of the past. But there is another point which was touched on in an earlier page and to which here, in a different connexion, we may briefly revert. It is well to realize that the greatest history of modern times was written by one in whom a distrust of enthusiasm was deeply rooted.[33] This cynicism was not inconsistent with partiality, with definite prepossessions, with a certain spite. In fact it supplied the antipathy which the artist infused when he mixed his most effective colours. The conviction that enthusiasm is inconsistent with intellectual balance was engrained in his mental constitu-

[33] And who regarded history as "little more than the register of the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind" (see below, p. 77).

tion, and confirmed by study and experience. It might be reasonably maintained that zeal for men or causes is an historian's marring, and that "reserve sympathy"—the principle of Thucydides—is the first lesson he has to learn. But without venturing on any generalization we must consider Gibbon's zealous distrust of zeal as an essential and most suggestive characteristic of the "Decline and Fall".

THE HISTORY

OF THE

DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

CHAPTER I

The Extent and Military Force of the Empire in the Age of the Antonines

Introduction

In the second century of the Christian Æra, the empire of Rome comprehended the fairest part of the earth, and the most civilized portion of mankind. The frontiers of that extensive monarchy were guarded by ancient renown and disciplined valour. The gentle, but powerful, influence of laws and manners had gradually cemented the union of the provinces. Their peaceful inhabitants enjoyed and abused the advantages of wealth and luxury. The image of a free constitution was preserved with decent reverence. The Roman senate appeared to possess the sovereign authority, and devolved on the emperors all the executive powers of government. During a happy period of more than fourscore years, the public administration was conducted by the virtue and abilities of Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonines. It is the design of this and of the two succeeding chapters, to describe the prosperous condition of their empire; and afterwards, from the death of Marcus Antoninus, to deduce the most important circumstances of its decline and fall: a revolution which will ever be remembered, and is still felt by the nations of the earth.

A.D. 98-180

Moderation of Augustus

The principal conquests of the Romans were achieved under the republic; and the emperors, for the most part, were satisfied with preserving those dominions which had been acquired by the policy of the senate, the active emulation of the consuls, and the martial enthusiasm of the people. The seven first centuries were filled with a rapid succession of triumphs; but it was reserved for Augustus to relinquish the ambitious design of

subduing the whole earth, and to introduce a spirit of moderation into the public councils. Inclined to peace by his temper and situation, it was easy for him to discover that Rome, in her present exalted situation, had much less to hope than to fear from the chance of arms ; and that, in the prosecution of remote wars, the undertaking became every day more difficult, the event more doubtful, and the possession more precarious and less beneficial. The experience of Augustus added weight to these salutary reflections, and effectually convinced him that, by the prudent vigour of his counsels, it would be easy to secure every concession which the safety or the dignity of Rome might require from the most formidable barbarians. Instead of exposing his person and his legions to the arrows of the Parthians, he obtained, by an honourable treaty, the restitution of the standards and prisoners which had been taken in the defeat of Crassus.[1]

His generals, in the early part of his reign, attempted the reduction of Æthiopia and Arabia Felix. They marched near a thousand miles to the south of the tropic ; but the heat of the climate soon repelled the invaders and protected the unwarlike natives of those sequestered regions.[2] The northern countries of Europe scarcely deserved the expense and labour of conquest. The forests and morasses of Germany were filled with a hardy race of barbarians, who despised life when it was separated from freedom ; and though, on the first attack, they seemed to yield to the weight of the Roman power, they soon, by a signal act of despair, regained their independence, and reminded Augustus of the vicissitude of fortune.[3] On the death of that emperor his testament was publicly read in the senate. He bequeathed, as a valuable legacy to his successors, the advice of confining the empire within those limits which nature seemed to have placed

[1] Dion Cassius (l. liv. p. 736 [8]) with the annotations of Reimar, who as collected all that Roman vanity has left upon the subject. The marble of Ancyra, on which Augustus recorded his own exploits, asserts that *he compelled* the Parthians to restore the ensigns of Crassus.

[2] Strabo (l. xvi. p. 780), Pliny the elder (Hist. Natur. l. vi. 32, 35 [28, 29]) and Dion Cassius (l. liii. p. 723 [29], and l. liv. p. 734 [6]) have left us very curious details concerning these wars. The Romans made themselves masters of Mariaba, or Merab, a city of Arabia Felix, well known to the Orientals (see Abulfeda and the Nubian geography, p. 52). They were arrived within three days' journey of the Spice country, the rich object of their invasion. [See Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte*, v. p. 608 *sqq.*]

[3] By the slaughter of Varus and his three legions. See the first book of the Annals of Tacitus. Sueton. in August. c. 23, and Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 117, &c. Augustus did not receive the melancholy news with all the temper and firmness that might have been expected from his character.

as its permanent bulwarks and boundaries; on the west the Atlantic ocean; the Rhine and Danube on the north; the Euphrates on the east; and towards the south the sandy deserts of Arabia and Africa.[4]

Imitated by his successors

Happily for the repose of mankind, the moderate system recommended by the wisdom of Augustus was adopted by the fears and vices of his immediate successors. Engaged in the pursuit of pleasure or in the exercise of tyranny, the first Cæsars seldom showed themselves to the armies, or to the provinces; nor were they disposed to suffer that those triumphs which *their* indolence neglected should be usurped by the conduct and valour of their lieutenants. The military fame of a subject was considered as an insolent invasion of the Imperial prerogative; and it became the duty, as well as interest, of every Roman general, to guard the frontiers intrusted to his care, without aspiring to conquests which might have proved no less fatal to himself than to the vanquished barbarians.[5]

Conquest of Britain was the first exception to it

The only accession which the Roman empire received during the first century of the Christian æra was the province of Britain. In this single instance the successors of Cæsar and Augustus were persuaded to follow the example of the former, rather than the precept of the latter. The proximity of its situation to the coast of Gaul seemed to invite their arms; the pleasing, though doubtful, intelligence of a pearl fishery attracted their avarice;[6] and as Britain was viewed in the light of a distinct and insulated world, the conquest scarcely formed any exception to the general system of continental measures. After a war of about forty years, undertaken by the most stupid,[7] maintained by the most dissolute, and terminated by the most timid of all the emperors,

[4] Tacit. Annal. l. ii. [i. 11]. Dion Cassius, l. lvi. p. 832 [33], and the speech of Augustus himself, in Julian's Cæsars. It receives great light from the learned notes of his French translator, M. Spanheim.

[5] Germanicus, Suetonius Paulinus, and Agricola were checked and recalled in the course of their victories. Corbulo was put to death. Military merit, as it is admirably expressed by Tacitus, was, in the strictest sense of the word, *imperatoria virtus.*

[6] Cæsar himself conceals that ignoble motive; but it is mentioned by Suetonius, c. 47. The British pearls proved, however, of little value, on account of their dark and livid colour. Tacitus observes, with reason (in Agricola, c. 12), that it was an inherent defect. "Ego facilius crediderim, naturam margaritis deesse quam nobis avaritiam."

[7] Claudius, Nero, and Domitian. A hope is expressed by Pomponius Mela, l. iii. c. 6 (he wrote under Claudius), that, by the success of the Roman arms, the island and its savage inhabitants would soon be better known. It is amusing enough to peruse such passages in the midst of London.

the far greater part of the island submitted to the Roman yoke.[8] The various tribes of Britons possessed valour without conduct, and the love of freedom without the spirit of union. They took up arms with savage fierceness, they laid them down, or turned them against each other with wild inconstancy; and while they fought singly, they were successively subdued. Neither the fortitude of Caractacus, nor the despair of Boadicea, nor the fanaticism of the Druids, could avert the slavery of their country, or resist the steady progress of the Imperial generals, who maintained the national glory, when the throne was disgraced by the weakest or the most vicious of mankind. At the very time when Domitian, confined to his palace, felt the terrors which he inspired, his legions, under the command of the virtuous Agricola, defeated the collected force of the Caledonians at the foot of the Grampian hills;[9] and his fleets, venturing to explore an unknown and dangerous navigation, displayed the Roman arms round every part of the island. The conquest of Britain was considered as already achieved; and it was the design of Agricola to complete and ensure his success by the easy reduction of Ireland, for which, in his opinion, one legion and a few auxiliaries were sufficient.[10] The western isle might be improved into a valuable possession, and the Britons would wear their chains with the less reluctance, if the prospect and example of freedom was on every side removed from before their eyes.

But the superior merit of Agricola soon occasioned his removal from the government of Britain; and for ever disappointed this rational, though extensive, scheme of conquest. Before his departure the prudent general had provided for security as well as for dominion. He had observed that the island is almost divided into two unequal parts by the opposite gulfs or, as they are now called, the Friths of Scotland. Across the narrow interval of about forty miles he had drawn a line of military stations, which was afterwards fortified, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, by a turf rampart, erected on foundations of stone.[11] This wall

[8] See the admirable abridgment, given by Tacitus, in the Life of Agricola, and copiously, though perhaps not completely, illustrated by our own antiquarians, Camden and Horsley. [See Appendix 2.]

[9] [There is no good ground for the identification of *mons Graupius* with the Grampian hills. The date of the battle was 84 or 85 A.D.; the place is quite uncertain.]

[10] The Irish writers, jealous of their national honour, are extremely provoked on this occasion, both with Tacitus and with Agricola. [Agricola's design was not carried out because Domitian refused to send the additional legion.]

[11] See Horsley's Britannia Romana, l. i. c. 10.

of Antoninus, at a small distance beyond the modern cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, was fixed as the limit of the Roman province. The native Caledonians preserved, in the northern extremity of the island, their wild independence, for which they were not less indebted to their poverty than to their valour. Their incursions were frequently repelled and chastised; but their country was never subdued.[12] The masters of the fairest and most wealthy climates of the globe turned with contempt from gloomy hills assailed by the winter tempest, from lakes concealed in a blue mist, and from cold and lonely heaths, over which the deer of the forest were chased by a troop of naked barbarians.[13]

Conquest of Dacia: the second exception [A.D. 101-106]

Such was the state of the Roman frontiers, and such the maxims of Imperial policy, from the death of Augustus to the accession of Trajan. That virtuous and active prince had received the education of a soldier, and possessed the talents of a general.[14] The peaceful system of his predecessors was interrupted by scenes of war and conquest; and the legions, after a long interval, beheld a military emperor at their head. The first exploits of Trajan were against the Dacians, the most warlike of men, who dwelt beyond the Danube, and who, during the reign of Domitian, had insulted, with impunity, the majesty of Rome.[15] To the strength and fierceness of barbarians they added a contempt for life, which was derived from a warm persuasion of the immortality and transmigration of the soul.[16] Decebalus, the Dacian king, approved himself a rival not unworthy of Trajan; nor did he despair of his own and the public fortune, till, by the confession of his enemies, he had exhausted every resource both of valour and policy.[17] This memorable war, with a very short suspension of hostilities, lasted five years; and as the emperor could exert, without control, the whole force of the state, it was terminated by the absolute submission of the barbarians.[18] The new province of Dacia, which formed a second exception to the

[12] The poet Buchanan celebrates, with elegance and spirit (see his Sylvæ, v.), the unviolated independence of his native country. But, if the single testimony of Richard of Cirencester was sufficient to create a Roman province of Vespasiana to the north of the wall, that independence would be reduced within very narrow limits.

[13] See Appian (in Procem. [5]) and the uniform imagery of Ossian's poems, which, according to every hypothesis, were composed by a native Caledonian.

[14] See Pliny's Panegyric, which seems founded on facts.

[15] Dion Cassius, l. lxvii. [6 *et sqq.*].

[16] Herodotus, l. iv. c. 94. Julian in the Cæsars, with Spanheim's observations.

[17] Plin. Epist. viii. 9.

[18] Dion Cassius, l. lxviii. p. 1123, 1131 [6 and 14]. Julian. in Cæsaribus. Eutropius, viii. 2, 6. Aurelius Victor in Epitome. [See Appendix 3.]

precept of Augustus, was about thirteen hundred miles in circumference. Its natural boundaries were the Dniester, the Theiss, or Tibiscus, the Lower Danube, and the Euxine Sea. The vestiges of a military road may still be traced from the banks of the Danube to the neighbourhood of Bender, a place famous in modern history, and the actual frontier of the Turkish and Russian empires.[19]

Conquests of Trajan in the east

Trajan was ambitious of fame; and as long as mankind shall continue to bestow more liberal applause on their destroyers than on their benefactors, the thirst of military glory will ever be the vice of the most exalted characters. The praises of Alexander, transmitted by a succession of poets and historians, had kindled a dangerous emulation in the mind of Trajan. Like him, the Roman emperor undertook an expedition against the nations of the east, but he lamented with a sigh that his advanced age scarcely left him any hopes of equalling the renown of the son of Philip.[20] Yet the success of Trajan, however transient, was rapid and specious. The degenerate Parthians, broken by intestine discord, fled before his arms. He descended the river Tigris in triumph, from the mountains of Armenia to the Persian gulf. He enjoyed the honour of being the first, as he was the last, of the Roman generals, who ever navigated that remote sea. His fleets ravished the coasts of Arabia; and Trajan vainly flattered himself that he was approaching towards the confines of India.[21] Every day the astonished senate received the intelligence of new names and new nations that acknowledged his sway. They were informed that the kings of Bosphorus, Colchos, Iberia, Albania, Osrhoene, and even the Parthian monarch himself, had accepted their diadems from the hands of the emperor; that the independent tribes of the Median and Carduchian hills had implored his protection; and that the rich countries of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria, were reduced into the state of provinces.[22] But the death of Trajan soon clouded the splendid prospect;[23] and it was

[19] See a Memoir of M. d'Anville, on the Province of Dacia, in the Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xxviii.; p. 444-468.

[20] Trajan's sentiments are represented in a very just and lively manner in the Cæsars of Julian. [The date of the beginning of the Parthian War is 114 A.D.]

[21] Eutropius and Sextus Rufus have endeavoured to perpetuate the illusion. See a very sensible dissertation of M. Freret, in the Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xxi. p. 55.

[22] Dion Cassius, l. lxviii. [18 *et sqq.*]; and the Abbreviators.

[23] [117 A.D. A triumph in honour of this eastern expedition was celebrated after the emperor's death. On inscriptions he is called *Divus Traianus Parthicus*, instead of *Divus Traianus* (Schiller, *Gesch. der röm. Kaiserzeit*, i. 563).]

justly to be dreaded that so many distant nations would throw off the unaccustomed yoke, when they were no longer restrained by the powerful hand which had imposed it.

Resigned by his successor Hadrian

It was an ancient tradition that, when the Capitol was founded by one of the Roman kings, the god Terminus (who presided over boundaries, and was represented according to the fashion of that age by a large stone) alone, among all the inferior deities, refused to yield his place to Jupiter himself. A favourable inference was drawn from his obstinacy, which was interpreted by the augurs as a sure presage that the boundaries of the Roman power would never recede.[24] During many ages, the prediction, as it is usual, contributed to its own accomplishment. But though Terminus had resisted the majesty of Jupiter, he submitted to the authority of the emperor Hadrian.[25] The resignation of all the eastern conquests of Trajan was the first measure of his reign. He restored to the Parthians the election of an independent sovereign; withdrew the Roman garrisons from the provinces of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria; and, in compliance with the precepts of Augustus, once more established the Euphrates as the frontier of the empire.[26] Censure, which arraigns the public actions and the private motives of princes, has ascribed to envy a conduct which might be attributed to the prudence and moderation of Hadrian. The various character of that emperor, capable, by turns, of the meanest and the most generous sentiments, may afford some colour to the suspicion. It was, however, scarcely in his power to place the superiority of his predecessor in a more conspicuous light, than by thus confessing himself unequal to the task of defending the conquests of Trajan.

Contrast of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius

The martial and ambitious spirit of Trajan formed a very singular contrast with the moderation of his successor. The restless activity of Hadrian was not less remarkable when compared with the gentle repose of Antoninus Pius. The life of the former was almost a perpetual journey; and as he possessed the various talents of the soldier, the statesman, and the scholar, he gratified his curiosity in the discharge of his duty. Careless of the dif-

[24] Ovid Fast. l. ii. ver. 667. See Livy [i. 55], and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, under the reign of Tarquin.

[25] St. Augustin is highly delighted with the proof of the weakness of Terminus, and the vanity of the Augurs. See De Civitate Dei, iv. 29. [The loss of trans-Rhenane Germany was a previous instance of the retreat of Terminus.]

[26] See the Augustan History, p. 5 [i. 9]. Jerome's Chronicle, and all the Epitomisers. It is somewhat surprising, that this memorable event should be omitted by Dion, or rather by Xiphilin. [See Appendix 3.

ference of seasons and of climates, he marched on foot, and bare-headed, over the snows of Caledonia, and the sultry plains of the Upper Egypt; nor was there a province of the empire which, in the course of his reign, was not honoured with the presence of the monarch.[27] But the tranquil life of Antoninus Pius was spent in the bosom of Italy; and, during the twenty-three years that he directed the public administration, the longest journeys of that amiable prince extended no farther than from his palace in Rome to the retirement of his Lanuvian villa.[28]

Pacific system of Hadrian and the two Antonines

Notwithstanding this difference in their personal conduct, the general system of Augustus was equally adopted and uniformly pursued by Hadrian and by the two Antonines. They persisted in the design of maintaining the dignity of the empire, without attempting to enlarge its limits. By every honourable expedient they invited the friendship of the barbarians; and endeavoured to convince mankind that the Roman power, raised above the temptation of conquest, was actuated only by the love of order and justice. During a long period of forty-three years their virtuous labours were crowned with success; and, if we except a few slight hostilities that served to exercise the legions of the frontier, the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius offer the fair prospect of universal peace.[29] The Roman name was revered among the most remote nations of the earth. The fiercest barbarians frequently submitted their differences to the arbitration of the emperor; and we are informed by a contemporary historian that he had seen ambassadors who were refused the honour which they came to solicit, of being admitted into the rank of subjects.[30]

Defensive wars of Marcus Antoninus

The terror of the Roman arms added weight and dignity to the moderation of the emperors. They preserved peace by a constant preparation for war; and while justice regulated their conduct, they announced to the nations on their confines that

[27] Dion, l. lxix. p. 115 [9]. Hist. August. p. 5, 8 [i. 10 and 16]. If all our historians were lost, medals, inscriptions, and other monuments, would be sufficient to record the travels of Hadrian. [See Dürr, Die Reisen des Kaisers Hadrian, 1881.]

[28] See the Augustan History and the Epitomes. [Date: 138-161 A.D.]

[29] We must, however, remember that, in the time of Hadrian, a rebellion of the Jews raged with religious fury, though only in a single province. Pausanias (l. viii. c. 43), mentions two necessary and successful wars, conducted by the generals of Pius. 1st, Against the wandering Moors, who were driven into the solitudes of Atlas. 2d, Against the Brigantes of Britain, who had invaded the Roman province. Both these wars (with several other hostilities) are mentioned in the Augustan History, p. 19 [ii. 5].

[30] Appian of Alexandria, in the preface to his History of the Roman Wars [7].

they were as little disposed to endure as to offer an injury. The military strength, which it had been sufficient for Hadrian and the elder Antoninus to display, was exerted against the Parthians and the Germans by the emperor Marcus. The hostilities of the barbarians provoked the resentment of that philosophic monarch, and, in the prosecution of a just defence, Marcus and his generals obtained many signal victories, both on the Euphrates and on the Danube.[31] The military establishment of the Roman empire, which thus assured either its tranquillity or success, will now become the proper and important object of our attention.

Military establishment of the Roman emperors

In the purer ages of the commonwealth, the use of arms was reserved for those ranks of citizens who had a country to love, a property to defend, and some share in enacting those laws which it was their interest, as well as duty, to maintain. But in proportion as the public freedom was lost in extent of conquest, war was gradually improved into an art, and degraded into a trade.[32] The legions themselves, even at the time when they were recruited in the most distant provinces, were supposed to consist of Roman citizens. That distinction was generally considered either as a legal qualification or as a proper recompense for the soldier; but a more serious regard was paid to the essential merit of age, strength, and military stature.[33] In all levies, a just preference was given to the climates of the north over those of the south; the race of men born to the exercise of arms was sought for in the country rather than in cities, and it was very reasonably presumed that the hardy occupations of smiths, carpenters, and huntsmen would supply more vigour and resolution than the sedentary trades which are employed in the service of luxury.[34] After every qualification of property had been laid aside, the armies of the Roman emperors were still commanded, for the most part, by officers of a liberal birth and education; but the common soldiers, like the mercenary

[31] Dion, l. lxxi. Hist. August. in Marco [iv. 9, 12, 17, 20, 22, &c.]. The Parthian victories gave birth to a crowd of contemptible historians, whose memory has been rescued from oblivion, and exposed to ridicule, in a very lively piece of criticism of Lucian.

[32] The poorest rank of soldiers possessed above forty pounds sterling (Dionys. Halicarn. iv. 17), a very high qualification, at a time when money was so scarce, that an ounce of silver was equivalent to seventy pound weight of brass. The populace, excluded by the ancient constitution, were indiscriminately admitted by Marius. See Sallust. de Bell. Jugurth. c. 91 [86].

[33] Cæsar formed his legion Alauda of Gauls and strangers; but it was during the licence of civil war; and after the victory he gave them the freedom of the city, for their reward. [It was really formed, B.C. 55; Suetonius, Jul. 24.]

[34] See Vegetius de Re Militari, l. i. c. 2-7.

troops of modern Europe, were drawn from the meanest, and very frequently from the most profligate, of mankind.

Discipline

That public virtue, which among the ancients was denominated patriotism, is derived from a strong sense of our own interest in the preservation and prosperity of the free government of which we are members. Such a sentiment, which had rendered the legions of the republic almost invincible, could make but a very feeble impression on the mercenary servants of a despotic prince; and it became necessary to supply that defect by other motives, of a different, but not less forcible nature,—honour and religion. The peasant, or mechanic, imbibed the useful prejudice that he was advanced to the more dignified profession of arms, in which his rank and reputation would depend on his own valour; and that, although the prowess of a private soldier must often escape the notice of fame, his own behaviour might sometimes confer glory or disgrace on the company, the legion, or even the army, to whose honours he was associated. On his first entrance into the service, an oath was administered to him with every circumstance of solemnity. He promised never to desert his standard, to submit his own will to the commands of his leaders, and to sacrifice his life for the safety of the emperor and the empire.[35] The attachment of the Roman troops to their standards was inspired by the united influence of religion and of honour. The golden eagle, which glittered in the front of the legion, was the object of their fondest devotion; nor was it esteemed less impious than it was ignominious, to abandon that sacred ensign in the hour of danger.[36] These motives, which derived their strength from the imagination, were enforced by fears and hopes of a more substantial kind. Regular pay, occasional donatives, and a stated recompense, after the appointed term of service, alleviated the hardships of the military life,[37] whilst, on the other hand, it was impossible for

[35] The oath of service and fidelity to the emperor was annually renewed by the troops, on the first of January.

[36] Tacitus calls the Roman Eagles, Bellorum Deos. They were placed in a chapel in the camp, and with the other deities received the religious worship of the troops.

[37] See Gronovius de Pecunia vetere, l. iii. p. 120, &c. The emperor Domitian raised the annual stipend of the legionaries to twelve pieces of gold, which, in his time, was equivalent to about ten of our guineas. This pay, somewhat higher than our own, had been, and was afterwards, gradually increased, according to the progress of wealth and military government. After twenty years' service, the veteran received three thousand denarii (about one hundred pounds sterling), or a proportionable allowance of land. The pay and advantages of the guards were, in general, about double those of the legions.

cowardice or disobedience to escape the severest punishment. The centurions were authorized to chastise with blows, the generals had a right to punish with death; and it was an inflexible maxim of Roman discipline, that a good soldier should dread his officers far more than the enemy. From such laudable arts did the valour of the Imperial troops receive a degree of firmness and docility, unattainable by the impetuous and irregular passions of barbarians.

Exercises

And yet so sensible were the Romans of the imperfection of valour without skill and practice, that, in their language, the name of an army was borrowed from the word which signified exercise.[38] Military exercises were the important and unremitted object of their discipline. The recruits and young soldiers were constantly trained, both in the morning and in the evening, nor was age or knowledge allowed to excuse the veterans from the daily repetition of what they had completely learnt. Large sheds were erected in the winter-quarters of the troops, that their useful labours might not receive any interruption from the most tempestuous weather; and it was carefully observed, that the arms destined to this imitation of war should be of double the weight which was required in real action.[39] It is not the purpose of this work to enter into any minute description of the Roman exercises. We shall only remark that they comprehended whatever could add strength to the body, activity to the limbs, or grace to the motions. The soldiers were diligently instructed to march, to run, to leap, to swim, to carry heavy burdens, to handle every species of arms that was used either for offence or for defence, either in distant engagement or in a closer onset; to form a variety of evolutions; and to move to the sound of flutes in the Pyrrhic or martial dance.[40] In the midst of peace, the Roman troops familiarised themselves with the practice of war; and it is prettily remarked by an ancient historian who had fought against them, that the effusion of blood was the only circumstance which distinguished a field of battle from a field of exercise.[41] It was the policy

[38] *Exercitus ab exercitando*, Varro de Linguâ Latinâ, l. iv. [v. 87 ed. L. Müller]. Cicero in Tusculan, l. ii. 37. There is room for a very interesting work, which should lay open the connexion between the languages and manners of nations.

[39] Vegetius, l. i. c. 11, and the rest of his first book.

[40] The Pyrrhic Dance is extremely well illustrated by M. le Beau, in the Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xxxv. p. 262, &c. That learned academician, in a series of memoirs, has collected all the passages of the ancients that relate to the Roman legion.

[41] Joseph. de Bell. Judaico, l. iii. c. 5. We are indebted to this Jew for some very curious details of Roman discipline.

of the ablest generals, and even of the emperors themselves, to encourage these military studies by their presence and example; and we are informed that Hadrian, as well as Trajan, frequently condescended to instruct the inexperienced soldiers, to reward the diligent, and sometimes to dispute with them the prize of superior strength or dexterity.[42] Under the reigns of those princes, the science of tactics was cultivated with success; and as long as the empire retained any vigour, their military instructions were respected as the most perfect model of Roman discipline.

The legions under the emperors

Nine centuries of war had gradually introduced into the service many alterations and improvements. The legions, as they are described by Polybius,[43] in the time of the Punic wars, differed very materially from those which achieved the victories of Cæsar, or defended the monarchy of Hadrian and the Antonines. The constitution of the Imperial legion may be described in a few words.[44] The heavy armed infantry, which composed its principal strength,[45] was divided into ten cohorts, and fifty-five companies, under the orders of a correspondent number of tribunes and centurions. The first cohort, which always claimed the post of honour and the custody of the eagle, was formed of eleven hundred and five soldiers, the most approved for valour and fidelity. The remaining nine cohorts consisted each of five hundred and fifty-five; and the whole body of legionary infantry amounted to six thousand one hundred men. Their arms were uniform, and admirably adapted to the nature of their service: an open helmet, with a lofty crest; a breast-plate, or coat of mail; greaves on their legs, and an ample buckler on their left arm. The buckler was of an oblong and concave figure, four feet in length, and two and a half in breadth, framed of a light wood, covered with a bull's hide, and strongly guarded with plates of brass. Besides a lighter spear, the legionary soldier grasped in his right hand the formidable *pilum*, a ponderous javelin, whose utmost length was about six

Arms

[42] Plin. Panegyr. c. 13. Life of Hadrian, in the Augustan History [i. 14].

[43] See an admirable digression on the Roman discipline, in the sixth book of his history [19-42].

[44] Vegetius de Re Militari, l. ii. c. 5, &c. Considerable part of his very perplexed abridgment was taken from the regulations of Trajan and Hadrian; and the legion, as he describes it, cannot suit any other age of the Roman empire.

[45] Vegetius de Re Militari, l. ii. c. 1. In the purer age of Cæsar and Cicero, the word *miles* was almost confined to the infantry. Under the Lower Empire, and in the times of chivalry, it was appropriated almost as exclusively to the men at arms, who fought on horseback. [This account of the army demands some corrections. See Appendix 4.]

feet, and which was terminated by a massy triangular point of steel of eighteen inches.[46] This instrument was indeed much inferior to our modern fire-arms; since it was exhausted by a single discharge, at the distance of only ten or twelve paces. Yet, when it was launched by a firm and skilful hand, there was not any cavalry that durst venture within its reach, nor any shield or corslet that could sustain the impetuosity of its weight. As soon as the Roman had darted his *pilum*, he drew his sword, and rushed forwards to close with the enemy. It was a short well-tempered Spanish blade, that carried a double edge, and was alike suited to the purpose of striking or of pushing; but the soldier was always instructed to prefer the latter use of his weapon, as his own body remained less exposed, whilst he inflicted a more dangerous wound on his adversary.[47] The legion was usually drawn up eight deep; and the regular distance of three feet was left between the files as well as ranks.[48] A body of troops, habituated to preserve this open order, in a long front and a rapid charge, found themselves prepared to execute every disposition which the circumstances of war, or the skill of their leader, might suggest. The soldier possessed a free space for his arms and motions, and sufficient intervals were allowed, through which seasonable reinforcements might be introduced to the relief of the exhausted combatants.[49] The tactics of the Greeks and Macedonians were formed on very different principles. The strength of the phalanx depended on sixteen ranks of long pikes, wedged together in the closest array.[50] But it was soon discovered, by reflection as well as by the event, that the strength of the phalanx was unable to contend with the activity of the legion.[51]

Cavalry

The cavalry, without which the force of the legion would have remained imperfect, was divided into ten troops or squadrons; the first, as the companion of the first cohort, consisted of an hundred and thirty-two men; whilst each of the other nine amounted only to sixty-six. The entire establishment formed a

[46] In the time of Polybius and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (l. v. c. 45) the steel point of the *pilum* seems to have been much longer. In the time of Vegetius it was reduced to a foot or even nine inches. I have chosen a medium.

[47] For the legionary arms, see Lipsius de Militiâ Romanâ, l. iii. c. 2-7.

[48] See the beautiful comparison of Virgil, Georgic. ii. v. 279.

[49] M. Guichard, Mémoires Militaires, tom. i. c. 4, and Nouveaux Mémoires, tom. i. p. 293-311, has treated the subject like a scholar and an officer.

[50] See Arrian's Tactics [12]. With the true partiality of a Greek, Arrian rather chose to describe the phalanx of which he had read, than the legions which he had commanded.

[51] Polyb. l. xvii. [xviii. 15].

regiment, if we may use the modern expression, of seven hundred and twenty-six horse, naturally connected with its respective legion, but occasionally separated to act in the line, and to compose a part of the wings of the army.[52] The cavalry of the emperors was no longer composed, like that of the ancient republic, of the noblest youths of Rome and Italy, who, by performing their military service on horseback, prepared themselves for the offices of senator and consul; and solicited, by deeds of valour, the future suffrages of their countrymen.[53] Since the alteration of manners and government, the most wealthy of the equestrian order were engaged in the administration of justice, and of the revenue;[54] and whenever they embraced the profession of arms, they were immediately intrusted with a troop of horse, or a cohort of foot.[55] Trajan and Hadrian formed their cavalry from the same provinces, and the same class of their subjects, which recruited the ranks of the legion. The horses were bred, for the most part, in Spain or Cappadocia. The Roman troopers despised the complete armour with which the cavalry of the East was encumbered. *Their* more useful arms consisted in a helmet, an oblong shield, light boots, and a coat of mail. A javelin, and a long broad sword, were their principal weapons of offence. The use of lances and of iron maces they seemed to have borrowed from the barbarians.[56]

Auxiliaries

The safety and honour of the empire was principally intrusted to the legions, but the policy of Rome condescended to adopt every useful instrument of war. Considerable levies were regularly made among the provincials, who had not yet deserved the honourable distinction of Romans. Many dependent princes and communities, dispersed round the frontiers, were permitted, for a while, to hold their freedom and security by the tenure of military service.[57] Even select troops of hostile barbarians were

[52] Veget. de Re Militari, l. ii. c. 6. His positive testimony, which might be supported by circumstantial evidence, ought surely to silence those critics who refuse the Imperial legion its proper body of cavalry. [But his testimony must be treated with great caution.]

[53] See Livy almost throughout, particularly xlii. 61.

[54] Plin. Hist. Natur. xxxiii. 2. The true sense of that very curious passage was first discovered and illustrated by M. de Beaufort, République Romaine, l. ii. c. 2.

[55] As in the instance of Horace and Agricola. This appears to have been a defect in the Roman discipline; which Hadrian endeavoured to remedy by ascertaining the legal age of a tribune. [For the *equites*, compare Mommsen, Staatsrecht, iii. 476-569.]

[56] See Arrian's Tactics [4].

[57] Such, in particular, was the state of the Batavians. Tacit. Germania, c. 29.

frequently compelled or persuaded to consume their dangerous valour in remote climates, and for the benefit of the state.[58] All these were included under the general name of auxiliaries; and howsoever they might vary according to the difference of times and circumstances, their numbers were seldom much inferior to those of the legions themselves.[59] Among the auxiliaries, the bravest and most faithful bands were placed under the command of præfects and centurions, and severely trained in the arts of Roman discipline; but the far greater part retained those arms, to which the nature of their country, or their early habits of life, more peculiarly adapted them. By this institution, each legion, to whom a certain proportion of auxiliaries was allotted, contained within itself every species of lighter troops, and of missile weapons; and was capable of encountering every nation with the advantages of its respective arms and discipline.[60] Nor was the legion destitute of what, in modern language, would be styled a train of artillery. It consisted in ten military engines of the largest, and fifty-five of a smaller size; but all of which, either in an oblique or horizontal manner, discharged stones and darts with irresistible violence.[61]

Artillery

The camp of a Roman legion presented the appearance of a fortified city.[62] As soon as the space was marked out, the pioneers carefully levelled the ground, and removed every impediment that might interrupt its perfect regularity. Its form was an exact quadrangle; and we may calculate, that a square of about seven hundred yards was sufficient for the encampment of twenty thousand Romans; though a similar number of our own troops would expose to the enemy a front of more than treble that extent. In the midst of the camp, the prætorium,

Encampment

[58] Marcus Antoninus obliged the vanquished Quadi and Marcomanni to supply him with a large body of troops, which he immediately sent into Britain. Dion Cassius, l. lxxi. [16].

[59] Tacit. Annal. iv. 5. Those who fix a regular proportion of as many foot, and twice as many horse, confound the auxiliaries of the emperors with the Italian allies of the republic. [See Appendix 4.]

[60] Vegetius, ii. 2. Arrian, in his order of march and battle against the Alani.

[61] The subject of the ancient machines is treated with great knowledge and ingenuity by the Chevalier Folard (Polybe, tom. ii. p. 233-290). He prefers them in many respects to our modern cannon and mortars. We may observe that the use of them in the field gradually became more prevalent, in proportion as personal valour and military skill declined with the Roman empire. When men were no longer found, their place was supplied by machines. See Vegetius, ii. 25. Arrian.

[62] Vegetius finishes his second book, and the description of the legion, with the following emphatic words: "Universa quæ in quoque belli genere necessaria esse creduntur, secum legio debet ubique portare, ut in quovis loco fixerit castra, armatam faciat civitatem".

or general's quarters, rose above the others; the cavalry, the infantry, and the auxiliaries occupied their respective stations; the streets were broad and perfectly straight, and a vacant space of two hundred feet was left on all sides, between the tents and the rampart. The rampart itself was usually twelve feet high, armed with a line of strong and intricate palisades, and defended by a ditch of twelve feet in depth as well as in breadth. This important labour was performed by the hands of the legionaries themselves; to whom the use of the spade and the pick-axe was no less familiar than that of the sword or *pilum*. Active valour may often be the present of nature; but such patient diligence can be the fruit only of habit and discipline.[63]

March.

Whenever the trumpet gave the signal of departure, the camp was almost instantly broken up, and the troops fell into their ranks without delay or confusion. Besides their arms, which the legionaries scarcely considered as an encumbrance, they were laden with their kitchen furniture, the instruments of fortification, and the provision of many days.[64] Under this weight, which would oppress the delicacy of a modern soldier, they were trained by a regular step to advance, in about six hours, near twenty miles.[65] On the appearance of an enemy, they threw aside their baggage, and, by easy and rapid evolutions, converted the column of march into an order of battle.[66] The slingers and archers skirmished in the front; the auxiliaries formed the first line, and were seconded or sustained by the strength of the legions; the cavalry covered the flanks, and the military engines were placed in the rear.

Number and disposition of the legions.

Such were the arts of war, by which the Roman emperors defended their extensive conquests, and preserved a military spirit, at a time when every other virtue was oppressed by luxury and despotism. If, in the consideration of their armies, we pass from their discipline to their numbers, we shall not find it easy to define them with any tolerable accuracy. We may compute, however, that the legion, which was itself a body of six thousand eight hundred and thirty-one Romans, might, with its attendant auxiliaries, amount to about twelve thousand five

[63] For the Roman Castrametation, see Polybius, l. vi. [*27 et sqq.*] with Lipsius de Militiâ Romanâ, Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. iii. c. 5. Vegetius, i. 21-25, iii. 9, and Mémoires de Guichard, tom. i. c. 1.

[64] Cicero in Tusculan, ii. 37 [16].—Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. iii. 5. Frontinus, iv. 1.

[65] Vegetius, i. 9. See Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xxv. p. 187.

[66] See those evolutions admirably well explained by M. Guichard, Nouveaux Mémoires, tom. i. p. 141-234.

hundred men. The peace establishment of Hadrian and his successors was composed of no less than thirty of these formidable brigades; and most probably formed a standing force of three hundred and seventy-five thousand men. Instead of being confined within the walls of fortified cities, which the Romans considered as the refuge of weakness or pusillanimity, the legions were encamped on the banks of the great rivers, and along the frontiers of the barbarians. As their stations, for the most part, remained fixed and permanent, we may venture to describe the distribution of the troops. Three legions were sufficient for Britain. The principal strength lay upon the Rhine and Danube, and consisted of sixteen legions, in the following proportions; two in the Lower, and three in the Upper Germany; one in Rhætia, one in Noricum, four in Pannonia, three in Mæsia, and two in Dacia. The defence of the Euphrates was intrusted to eight legions, six of whom were planted in Syria, and the other two in Cappadocia. With regard to Egypt, Africa and Spain, as they were far removed from any important scene of war, a single legion maintained the domestic tranquillity of each of those great provinces. Even Italy was not left destitute of a military force. Above twenty thousand chosen soldiers, distinguished by the titles of City Cohorts and Prætorian Guards, watched over the safety of the monarch and the capital. As the authors of almost every revolution that distracted the empire, the Prætorians will very soon and very loudly demand our attention; but, in their arms and institutions, we cannot find any circumstance which discriminated them from the legions, unless it were a more splendid appearance, and a less rigid discipline.[67]

Navy

The navy maintained by the emperors might seem inadequate to their greatness; but it was fully sufficient for every useful purpose of government. The ambition of the Romans was confined to the land; nor was that warlike people ever actuated by the enterprising spirit which had prompted the navigators of Tyre, of Carthage, and even of Marseilles, to enlarge the bounds of the world, and to explore the most remote coasts of the ocean. To the Romans the ocean remained an object of terror rather than of curiosity;[68] the whole extent of the Mediterranean,

[67] Tacitus (Annal. iv. 5) has given us a state of the legions under Tiberius; and Dion Cassius (l. lv. p. 794 [23]) under Alexander Severus. I have endeavoured to fix on the proper medium between these two periods. See likewise Lipsius de Magnitudine Romanâ, l. i. c. 4, 5. [On the author's procedure here, see Appendix 4. On the Prætorian Guards see below, p. 104.]

[68] The Romans tried to disguise, by the pretence of religious awe, their ignorance and terror. See Tacit. Germania, c. 34.

after the destruction of Carthage and the extirpation of the pirates, was included within their provinces. The policy of the emperors was directed only to preserve the peaceful dominion of that sea, and to protect the commerce of their subjects. With these moderate views, Augustus stationed two permanent fleets in the most convenient ports of Italy, the one at Ravenna, on the Adriatic, the other at Misenum, in the bay of Naples. Experience seems at length to have convinced the ancients that, as soon as their galleys exceeded two, or at the most three ranks of oars, they were suited rather for vain pomp than for real service. Augustus himself, in the victory of Actium, had seen the superiority of his own light frigates (they were called Liburnians) over the lofty but unwieldy castles of his rival.[69] Of these Liburnians he composed the two fleets of Ravenna and Misenum, destined to command, the one the eastern, the other the western division of the Mediterranean; and to each of the squadrons he attached a body of several thousand marines. Besides these two ports, which may be considered as the principal seats of the Roman navy, a very considerable force was stationed at Frejus, on the coast of Provence, and the Euxine was guarded by forty ships, and three thousand soldiers. To all these we add the fleet which preserved the communication between Gaul and Britain, and a great number of vessels constantly maintained on the Rhine and Danube, to harass the country, or to intercept the passage of the barbarians.[70] If we review this general state of the Imperial forces, of the cavalry as well as infantry, of the legions, the auxiliaries, the guards, and the navy, the most liberal computation will not allow us to fix the entire establishment by sea and by land at more than four hundred and fifty thousand men: a military power which, however formidable it may seem, was equalled by a monarch of the last century, whose kingdom was confined within a single province of the Roman empire.[71]

Amount of the whole establishment

View of the provinces of the Roman empire

We have attempted to explain the spirit which moderated, and the strength which supported, the power of Hadrian and the Antonines. We shall now endeavour, with clearness and precision, to describe the provinces once united under their

[69] Plutarch. in Marc. Anton [66]. And yet if we may credit Orosius, these monstrous castles were no more than ten feet above the water, vi. 19. [They had two ranks of oars.]

[70] See Lipsius, de Magnitud. Rom. l. i. c. 5. The sixteen last chapters of Vegetius relate to naval affairs. [See Appendix 5.]

[71] Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV. c. 29. It must, however, be remembered, that France still feels that extraordinary effort.

sway, but, at present, divided into so many independent and hostile states.[72]

Spain, the western extremity of the empire, of Europe, and of the ancient world, has, in every age, invariably preserved the same natural limits; the Pyrenean mountains, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic Ocean. That great peninsula, at present so unequally divided between two sovereigns, was distributed by Augustus into three provinces, Lusitania, Bætica, and Tarraconensis.[73] The kingdom of Portugal now fills the place of the warlike country of the Lusitanians; and the loss sustained by the former, on the side of the East, is compensated by an accession of territory towards the North. The confines of Grenada and Andalusia correspond with those of ancient Bætica. The remainder of Spain—Gallicia, and the Asturias, Biscay, and Navarre, Leon, and the two Castilles, Murcia, Valencia, Catalonia, and Arragon,—all contributed to form the third and most considerable of the Roman governments, which, from the name of its capital, was styled the province of Tarragona.[74] Of the native barbarians, the Celtiberians were the most powerful, as the Cantabrians and Asturians proved the most obstinate. Confident in the strength of their mountains, they were the last who submitted to the arms of Rome, and the first who threw off the yoke of the Arabs. Spain

Ancient Gaul, as it contained the whole country between the Pyrenees, the Alps, the Rhine, and the Ocean, was of greater extent than modern France. To the dominions of that powerful monarchy, with its recent acquisitions of Alsace and Lorraine, we must add the duchy of Savoy, the cantons of Switzerland, the four electorates of the Rhine, and the territories of Liege, Luxemburg, Hainault, Flanders and Brabant. When Augustus gave laws to the conquests of his father, he introduced a division of Gaul equally adapted to the progress of the legions, to the course of the rivers, and to the principal national distinctions, which had comprehended above an hundred independent states.[75] Gaul

[72] [This list of the provinces is incomplete. For full list see Appendix 6.]

[73] [Bætica was divided from Tarraconensis by the *saltus Castulonensis.*]

[74] See Strabo, l. ii. [Rather iii. p. 166.] It is natural enough to suppose, that Arragon is derived from Tarraconensis, and several moderns who have written in Latin use those words as synonymous. It is, however, certain, that the Arragon, a little stream which falls from the Pyrenees into the Ebro, first gave its name to a country, and gradually to a kingdom. See d'Anville, Géographie du Moyen Age, p. 181.

[75] One hundred and fifteen *cities* appear in the Notitia of Gaul; and it is well known that this appellation was applied not only to the capital town, but to the whole territory of each state. But Plutarch and Appian increase the number of tribes to three or four hundred.

The sea-coast of the Mediterranean, Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphiné, received their provincial appellation from the colony of Narbonne. The government of Aquitaine was extended from the Pyrenees to the Loire. The country between the Loire and the Seine was styled the Celtic Gaul, and soon borrowed a new denomination from the celebrated colony of Lugdunum, or Lyons. The Belgic lay beyond the Seine, and in more ancient times had been bounded only by the Rhine; but a little before the age of Cæsar, the Germans, abusing their superiority of valour, had occupied a considerable portion of the Belgic territory. The Roman conquerors very eagerly embraced so flattering a circumstance, and the Gallic frontier of the Rhine, from Basil to Leyden, received the pompous names of the Upper and the Lower Germany.[76] Such, under the reign of the Antonines, were the six provinces of Gaul; the Narbonnese, Aquitaine, the Celtic, or Lyonnese, the Belgic, and the two Germanies.

Britain

We have already had occasion to mention the conquest of Britain, and to fix the boundary of the Roman province in this island. It comprehended all England, Wales, and the Lowlands of Scotland, as far as the Friths of Dumbarton and Edinburgh. Before Britain lost her freedom, the country was irregularly divided between thirty tribes of barbarians, of whom the most considerable were the Belgæ in the West, the Brigantes in the North, the Silures in South Wales, and the Iceni in Norfolk and Suffolk.[77] As far as we can either trace or credit the resemblance of manners and language, Spain, Gaul and Britain were peopled by the same hardy race of savages. Before they yielded to the Roman arms, they often disputed the field, and often renewed the contest. After their submission they constituted the western division of the European provinces, which extended from the columns of Hercules to the wall of Antoninus,[78] and from the mouth of the Tagus to the sources of the Rhine and Danube.

Italy

Before the Roman conquest, the country which is now called Lombardy was not considered as a part of Italy. It had been occupied by a powerful colony of Gauls, who, settling themselves along the banks of the Po, from Piedmont to Romagna, carried their arms and diffused their name from the Alps to the

[76] D'Anville, Notice de l'Ancienne Gaule. [These frontier districts received their names when the true province of Germany, between Rhine and Elbe, which had been won by Drusus, was lost by the defeat of Varus in 9 A.D.]

[77] Whitaker's History of Manchester, vol. i. c. 3.

[78] [A rampart from the Clyde to the Forth built in the reign of Antoninus Pius by the prefect Lollius Urbicus. For this wall see Stuart's Caledonia.]

Apennine. The Ligurians dwelt on the rocky coast, which now forms the republic of Genoa.[79] Venice was yet unborn; but the territories of that state, which lie to the east of the Adige, were inhabited by the Venetians.[80] The middle part of the peninsula, that now composes the duchy of Tuscany and the ecclesiastical state, was the ancient seat of the Etruscans and Umbrians; to the former of whom Italy was indebted for the first rudiments of a civilized life.[81] The Tiber rolled at the foot of the seven hills of Rome, and the country of the Sabines, the Latins, and the Volsci, from that river to the frontiers of Naples, was the theatre of her infant victories. On that celebrated ground the first consuls deserved triumphs, their successors adorned villas, and *their* posterity have erected convents.[82] Capua and Campania possessed the immediate territory of Naples; the rest of the kingdom was inhabited by many warlike nations, the Marsi, the Samnites, the Apulians, and the Lucanians; and the sea-coasts had been covered by the flourishing colonies of the Greeks. We may remark, that when Augustus divided Italy into eleven regions, the little province of Istria was annexed to that seat of Roman sovereignty.[83]

The European provinces of Rome were protected by the course of the Rhine and the Danube. The latter of those mighty streams, which rises at the distance of only thirty miles from the former, flows above thirteen hundred miles, for the most part to the south-east, collects the tribute of sixty navigable rivers, and is, at length, through six mouths, received into the Euxine, which appears scarcely equal to such an accession of waters.[84] The provinces of the Danube soon acquired the general appellation of Illyricum, or the Illyrian frontier,[85] and were esteemed the most warlike of the empire; but they deserve to be more particularly considered under the names of Rhætia, Noricum,

The Danube and Illyrian frontier

[79] [We shall find late Greek historians calling the Genoese *Ligurians* (Λιγούριοι). It sounds odd, but serves to remind us that the great city of Liguria did not preserve the ancient name of the territory like her eastern rival, the great city of Venetia.]

[80] The Italian Veneti, though often confounded with the Gauls, were more probably of Illyrian origin. See M. Freret, Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xviii.

[81] See Maffei Verona illustrata, l. .

[82] The first contrast was observed by the ancients. See Florus, l. II. The second must strike every modern traveller.

[83] Pliny (Hist. Natur. l. iii. [6]) follows the division of Italy, by Augustus.

[84] Tournefort, Voyages en Grèce et Asie Mineure, lettre xviii.

[85] The name of Illyricum originally belonged to the sea-coast of the Adriatic, and was gradually extended by the Romans from the Alps to the Euxine Sea. See Severini Pannonia, l. i. c. 3.

Pannonia, Dalmatia, Dacia, Mæsia, Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece.

Rhætia

The province of Rhætia, which soon extinguished the name of the Vindelicians, extended from the summit of the Alps to the banks of the Danube; from its source, as far as its conflux with the Inn. The greatest part of the flat country is subject to the elector of Bavaria; the city of Augsburg is protected by the constitution of the German empire; the Grisons are safe in their mountains; and the country of Tyrol is ranked among the numerous provinces of the house of Austria.

Noricum and Pannonia

The wide extent of territory which is included between the Inn, the Danube, and the Save,—Austria, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, the Lower Hungary and Sclavonia,—was known to the ancients under the names of Noricum and Pannonia. In their original state of independence their fierce inhabitants were intimately connected. Under the Roman government they were frequently united, and they still remain the patrimony of a single family. They now contain the residence of a German prince, who styles himself Emperor of the Romans, and form the centre, as well as strength, of the Austrian power. It may not be improper to observe, that, if we except Bohemia, Moravia, the northern skirts of Austria, and a part of Hungary, between the Theiss and the Danube, all the other dominions of the house of Austria were comprised within the limits of the Roman empire.

Dalmatia

Dalmatia, to which the name of Illyricum more properly belonged, was a long, but narrow tract, between the Save and the Adriatic. The best part of the sea-coast, which still retains its ancient appellation, is a province of the Venetian state, and the seat of the little republic of Ragusa. The inland parts have assumed the Sclavonian names of Croatia and Bosnia; the former obeys an Austrian governor, the latter a Turkish pasha; but the whole country is still infested by tribes of barbarians, whose savage independence irregularly marks the doubtful limit of the Christian and Mahometan power.[86]

Mæsia and Dacia

After the Danube had received the waters of the Theiss and the Save, it acquired, at least among the Greeks, the name of Ister.[87] It formerly divided Mæsia and Dacia, the latter of

[86] A Venetian traveller, the Abbate Fortis, has lately given us some account of those very obscure countries. But the geography and antiquities of the western Illyricum can be expected only from the munificence of the emperor, its sovereign. [See Mr. Jackson's work entitled Dalmatia, the Quarnero, and Istria.]

[87] The Save rises near the confines of *Istria*, and was considered by the more early Greeks as the principal stream of the Danube,

which, as we have already seen, was a conquest of Trajan, and the only province beyond the river. If we inquire into the present state of those countries, we shall find that, on the left hand of the Danube, Temeswar and Transylvania have been annexed, after many revolutions, to the crown of Hungary; whilst the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia acknowledge the supremacy of the Ottoman Porte. On the right hand of the Danube, Mæsia, which during the middle ages was broken into the barbarian kingdoms of Servia and Bulgaria, is again united in Turkish slavery.

Thrace Macedonia and Greece

The appellation of Roumelia, which is still bestowed by the Turks on the extensive countries of Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece, preserves the memory of their ancient state under the Roman empire.[88] In the time of the Antonines, the martial regions of Thrace, from the mountains of Hæmus and Rhodope to the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, had assumed the form of a province. Notwithstanding the change of masters and of religion, the new city of Rome, founded by Constantine on the banks of the Bosphorus, has ever since remained the capital of a great monarchy. The kingdom of Macedonia, which, under the reign of Alexander, gave laws to Asia, derived more solid advantages from the policy of the two Philips; and, with its dependencies of Epirus and Thessaly, extended from the Ægean to the Ionian sea. When we reflect on the fame of Thebes and Argos, of Sparta and Athens, we can scarcely persuade ourselves that so many immortal republics of ancient Greece were lost in a single province of the Roman empire, which, from the superior influence of the Achæan league, was usually denominated the province of Achaia.

Asia Minor

Such was the state of Europe under the Roman emperors. The provinces of Asia, without excepting the transient conquests of Trajan, are all comprehended within the limits of the Turkish power. But instead of following the arbitrary divisions of despotism and ignorance, it will be safer for us, as well as more agreeable, to observe the indelible characters of nature. The name of Asia Minor is attributed, with some propriety, to the peninsula which, confined between the Euxine and the Mediterranean, advances from the Euphrates towards Europe. The most extensive and flourishing district westward of Mount Taurus

[88] [Thrace is Eastern Roumelia; Macedonia and Greece, Western Roumelia. Since Greece became independent, one hears less of Western Roumelia, but the name is still applicable to Macedonia; Greece has severed her connexion with the usurped inheritance of New Rome. Only the Eastern Roumelia will as a rule be found marked on maps. See Appendix 7.]

and the river Halys, was dignified by the Romans with the exclusive title of Asia. The jurisdiction of that province extended over the ancient monarchies of Troy, Lydia, and Phrygia, the maritime countries of the Pamphylians, Lycians, and Carians, and the Grecian colonies of Ionia, which equalled in arts, though not in arms, the glory of their parent. The kingdoms of Bithynia and Pontus possessed the northern side of the peninsula from Constantinople to Trebizond. On the opposite side the province of Cilicia was terminated by the mountains of Syria: the inland country, separated from the Roman Asia by the river Halys, and from Armenia by the Euphrates, had once formed the independent kingdom of Cappadocia. In this place we may observe that the northern shores of the Euxine, beyond Trebizond in Asia and beyond the Danube in Europe, acknowledged the sovereignty of the emperors, and received at their hands either tributary princes or Roman garrisons. Budzak, Crim Tartary, Circassia, and Mingrelia, are the modern appellations of those savage countries.[89]

Syria, Phœnicia, and Palestine

Under the successors of Alexander, Syria was the seat of the Seleucidæ, who reigned over Upper Asia, till the successful revolt of the Parthians confined their dominions between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean. When Syria became subject to the Romans, it formed the eastern frontier of their empire; nor did that province, in its utmost latitude, know any other bounds than the mountains of Cappadocia to the north, and, towards the south, the confines of Egypt and the Red Sea. Phœnicia and Palestine were sometimes annexed to, and sometimes separated from, the jurisdiction of Syria. The former of these was a narrow and rocky coast; the latter was a territory scarcely superior to Wales, either in fertility or extent. Yet Phœnicia and Palestine will for ever live in the memory of mankind; since America, as well as Europe, has received letters from the one, and religion from the other.[90] A sandy desert,

[89] See the Periplus of Arrian. He examined the coasts of the Euxine, when he was governor of Cappadocia.

[90] The progress of religion is well known. The use of letters was introduced among the savages of Europe about fifteen hundred years before Christ; and the Europeans carried them to America, about fifteen centuries after the Christian æra. But in a period of three thousand years, the Phœnician alphabet received considerable alterations, as it passed through the hands of the Greeks and Romans. [The date here given for the introduction of the Phœnician alphabet to Europe, that is, among the Greeks, is much too early. The earliest date that can be plausibly maintained is the tenth century, the latest, the eighth. But there are traces of hieroglyphic writing at Mycenæ, and Mr. Arthur Evans's discoveries in Crete point to the use not only of hieroglyphics, but a syllabary (like the Cyprian) centuries before the introduction of the Phœnician letters.]

alike destitute of wood and water, skirts along the doubtful confine of Syria, from the Euphrates to the Red Sea. The wandering life of the Arabs was inseparably connected with their independence, and wherever, on some spots less barren than the rest, they ventured to form any settled habitations, they soon became subjects to the Roman empire.[91]

Egypt. The geographers of antiquity have frequently hesitated to what portion of the globe they should ascribe Egypt.[92] By its situation that celebrated kingdom is included within the immense peninsula of Africa; but it is accessible only on the side of Asia, whose revolutions, in almost every period of history, Egypt has humbly obeyed. A Roman præfect was seated on the splendid throne of the Ptolemies; and the iron sceptre of the Mamalukes is now in the hands of a Turkish pasha. The Nile flows down the country, above five hundred miles from the tropic of Cancer to the Mediterranean, and marks, on either side, the extent of fertility by the measure of its inundations. Cyrene, situated towards the west and along the sea-coast, was first a Greek colony, afterwards a province of Egypt, and is now lost in the desert of Barca.

Africa. From Cyrene to the ocean, the coast of Africa extends above fifteen hundred miles; yet so closely is it pressed between the Mediterranean and the Sahara, or sandy desert, that its breadth seldom exceeds fourscore or an hundred miles. The eastern division was considered by the Romans as the more peculiar and proper province of Africa. Till the arrival of the Phœnician colonies, that fertile country was inhabited by the Libyans, the most savage of mankind. Under the immediate jurisdiction of Carthage it became the centre of commerce and empire; but the republic of Carthage is now degenerated into the feeble and disorderly states of Tripoli and Tunis. The military government of Algiers oppresses the wide extent of Numidia, as it was once united under Massinissa and Jugurtha: but in the time of Augustus the limits of Numidia were contracted; and at least two-thirds of the country acquiesced in the name of Mauritania, with the epithet of Cæsariensis.[93] The genuine Mauritania, or

[91] Dion Cassius, lxviii. p. 1131 [14].

[92] Ptolemy and Strabo, with the modern geographers, fix the Isthmus of Suez as the boundary of Asia and Africa. Dionysius, Mela, Pliny, Sallust, Hirtius, and Solinus, have preferred for that purpose the western branch of the Nile, or even the great Catabathmus, or descent, which last would assign to Asia not only Egypt, but part of Libya.

[93] [The boundary between Maur. Caes. and Maur. Ting. was the river Mulucha.]

country of the Moors, which, from the ancient city of Tingi, or Tangier, was distinguished by the appellation of Tingitana, is represented by the modern kingdom of Fez. Sallè, on the Ocean, so infamous at present for its piratical depredations, was noticed by the Romans, as the extreme object of their power, and almost of their geography. A city of their foundation may still be discovered near Mequinez, the residence of the barbarian whom we condescend to style the Emperor of Morocco; but it does not appear that his more southern dominions, Morocco itself, and Segelmessa, were ever comprehended within the Roman province. The western parts of Africa are intersected by the branches of Mount Atlas, a name so idly celebrated by the fancy of poets;[94] but which is now diffused over the immense ocean that rolls between the ancient and the new continent.[95]

The Mediterranean with its islands

Having now finished the circuit of the Roman empire, we may observe that Africa is divided from Spain by a narrow strait of about twelve miles, through which the Atlantic flows into the Mediterranean. The columns of Hercules, so famous among the ancients, were two mountains which seemed to have been torn asunder by some convulsion of the elements; and at the foot of the European mountain the fortress of Gibraltar is now seated. The whole extent of the Mediterranean Sea, its coasts and its islands, were comprised within the Roman dominion. Of the larger islands, the two Baleares, which derive their names of Majorca and Minorca from their respective size, are subject at present, the former to Spain, the latter to Great Britain. It is easier to deplore the fate than to describe the actual condition of Corsica. Two Italian sovereigns assume a regal title from Sardinia and Sicily. Crete, or Candia, with Cyprus, and most of the smaller islands of Greece and Asia, have been subdued by the Turkish arms; whilst the little rock of Malta defies their power, and has emerged, under the government of its military Order, into fame and opulence.

General idea of the Roman empire

This long enumeration of provinces, whose broken fragments have formed so many powerful kingdoms, might almost induce us to forgive the vanity or ignorance of the ancients. Dazzled

[94] The long range, moderate height, and gentle declivity of Mount Atlas (see Shaw's Travels, p. 5) are very unlike a solitary mountain which rears its head into the clouds, and seems to support the heavens. The peak of Teneriff, on the contrary, rises a league and a half above the surface of the sea, and, as it was frequently visited by the Phœnicians, might engage the notice of the Greek poets. See Buffon, Histoire Naturelle, tom. i. p. 312. Histoire des Voyages, tom. ii.

[95] M. de Voltaire, tom. xiv. p. 297, unsupported by either fact or probability, has generously bestowed the Canary Islands on the Roman empire.

with the extensive sway, the irresistible strength, and the real or affected moderation of the emperors, they permitted themselves to despise, and sometimes to forget, the outlying countries which had been left in the enjoyment of a barbarous independence; and they gradually assumed the licence of confounding the Roman monarchy with the globe of the earth.[96] But the temper, as well as knowledge, of a modern historian require a more sober and accurate language. He may impress a juster image of the greatness of Rome by observing that the empire was above two thousand miles in breadth, from the wall of Antoninus and the northern limits of Dacia to Mount Atlas and the tropic of Cancer; that it extended in length more than three thousand miles, from the Western Ocean to the Euphrates; that it was situated in the finest part of the Temperate Zone, between the twenty-fourth and fifty-sixth degrees of northern latitude; and that it was supposed to contain above sixteen hundred thousand square miles, for the most part of fertile and well-cultivated land.[97]

[96] Bergier, Hist. des Grands Chemins, l. iii. c. 1, 2, 3, 4: a very useful collection.

[97] See Templeman's Survey of the Globe; but I distrust both the doctor's learning and his maps.

CHAPTER II

Of the Union and Internal Prosperity of the Roman Empire, in the Age of the Antonines

Principles of government

It is not alone by the rapidity or extent of conquest that we should estimate the greatness of Rome. The sovereign of the Russian deserts commands a larger portion of the globe. In the seventh summer after his passage of the Hellespont, Alexander erected the Macedonian trophies on the banks of the Hyphasis.[1] Within less than a century, the irresistible Zingis, and the Mogul princes of his race, spread their cruel devastations and transient empire from the sea of China to the confines of Egypt and Germany.[2] But the firm edifice of Roman power was raised and preserved by the wisdom of ages. The obedient provinces of Trajan and the Antonines were united by laws and adorned by arts. They might occasionally suffer from the partial abuse of delegated authority; but the general principle of government was wise, simple, and beneficent. They enjoyed the religion of their ancestors, whilst in civil honours and advantages they were exalted, by just degrees, to an equality with their conquerors.

Universal spirit of toleration

I. The policy of the emperors and the senate, as far as it concerned religion, was happily seconded by the reflections of the enlightened, and by the habits of the superstitious, part of their subjects. The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true; by the philosopher as equally false; and by the magistrate as equally useful. And thus toleration produced not only mutual indulgence, but even religious concord.

Of the people

The superstition of the people was not embittered by any mixture of theological rancour; nor was it confined by the chains of any speculative system. The devout polytheist, though fondly attached to his national rites, admitted with implicit

[1] They were erected about the midway between Lahor and Dehli. The conquests of Alexander in Hindostan were confined to the Punjab, a country watered by the five great streams of the Indus.

[2] See M. de Guignes Histoire des Huns, l. xv. xvi. and xvii.

faith the different religions of the earth.[3] Fear, gratitude, and curiosity, a dream or an omen, a singular disorder, or a distant journey, perpetually disposed him to multiply the articles of his belief, and to enlarge the list of his protectors. The thin texture of the pagan mythology was interwoven with various but not discordant materials. As soon as it was allowed that sages and heroes, who had lived or who had died for the benefit of their country, were exalted to a state of power and immortality, it was universally confessed that they deserved, if not the adoration, at least the reverence of all mankind. The deities of a thousand groves and a thousand streams possessed in peace their local and respective influence; nor could the Roman who deprecated the wrath of the Tiber deride the Egyptian who presented his offering to the beneficent genius of the Nile. The visible powers of Nature, the planets, and the elements, were the same throughout the universe. The invisible governors of the moral world were inevitably cast in a similar mould of fiction and allegory. Every virtue, and even vice, acquired its divine representative; every art and profession its patron, whose attributes in the most distant ages and countries were uniformly derived from the character of their peculiar votaries. A republic of gods of such opposite tempers and interests required, in every system, the moderating hand of a supreme magistrate, who, by the progress of knowledge and of flattery, was gradually invested with the sublime perfections of an Eternal Parent and an Omnipotent Monarch.[4] Such was the mild spirit of antiquity, that the nations were less attentive to the difference than to the resemblance of their religious worship. The Greek, the Roman, and the Barbarian, as they met before their respection altars, easily persuaded themselves that, under various names and with various ceremonies, they adored the same deities. The elegant mythology of Homer gave a beautiful and almost a regular form to the polytheism of the ancient world.[5]

[3] There is not any writer who describes in so lively a manner as Herodotus, the true genius of Polytheism. The best commentary may be found in Mr. Hume's Natural History of Religion; and the best contrast in Bossuet's Universal History. Some obscure traces of an intolerant spirit appear in the conduct of the Egyptians (see Juvenal, Sat. xv.); and the Christians as well as Jews, who lived under the Roman empire, formed a very important exception: so important indeed, that the discussion will require a distinct chapter of this work.

[4] The rights, power, and pretensions of the sovereign of Olympus are very clearly described in the xvth book of the Illiad: in the Greek original, I mean; for Mr. Pope, without perceiving it, has improved the theology of Homer.

[5] See for instance, Cæsar de Bell. Gall. vi. 17. Within a century or two the Gauls themselves applied to their gods the names of Mercury, Mars, Apollo, &c.

Of philosophers

The philosophers of Greece deduced their morals from the nature of man rather than from that of God. They meditated, however, on the Divine Nature as a very curious and important speculation, and in the profound inquiry they displayed the strength and weakness of the human understanding.[6] Of the four most celebrated schools, the Stoics and the Platonists endeavoured to reconcile the jarring interests of reason and piety. They have left us the most sublime proofs of the existence and perfections of the first cause; but, as it was impossible for them to conceive the creation of matter, the workman in the Stoic philosophy was not sufficiently distinguished from the work; whilst, on the contrary, the spiritual God of Plato and his disciples resembled an idea rather than a substance. The opinions of the Academics and Epicureans were of a less religious cast; but, whilst the modest science of the former induced them to doubt, the positive ignorance of the latter urged them to deny, the providence of a Supreme Ruler. The spirit of inquiry, prompted by emulation and supported by freedom, had divided the public teachers of philosophy into a variety of contending sects; but the ingenuous youth, who from every part resorted to Athens and the other seats of learning in the Roman empire, were alike instructed in every school to reject and to despise the religion of the multitude. How, indeed, was it possible that a philosopher should accept as divine truths the idle tales of the poets, and the incoherent traditions of antiquity; or that he should adore, as gods, those imperfect beings whom he must have despised, as men! Against such unworthy adversaries, Cicero condescended to employ the arms of reason and eloquence; but the satire of Lucian was a much more adequate as well as more efficacious weapon. We may be well assured that a writer conversant with the world would never have ventured to expose the gods of his country to public ridicule, had they not already been the objects of secret contempt among the polished and enlightened orders of society.[7]

Notwithstanding the fashionable irreligion which prevailed in the age of the Antonines, both the interests of the priests and the credulity of the people were sufficiently respected. In their writings and conversation the philosophers of antiquity asserted

[6] The admirable work of Cicero de Naturâ Deorum, is the best clue we have to guide us through the dark and profound abyss. He represents with candour, and confutes with subtlety, the opinions of the philosophers.

[7] I do not pretend to assert that, in this irreligious age, the natural terrors of superstition, dreams, omens, apparitions, &c., had lost their efficacy.

the independent dignity of reason; but they resigned their actions to the commands of law and of custom. Viewing with a smile of pity and indulgence the various errors of the vulgar, they diligently practised the ceremonies of their fathers, devoutly frequented the temples of the gods; and, sometimes condescending to act a part on the theatre of superstition, they concealed the sentiments of an Atheist under the sacerdotal robes. Reasoners of such a temper were scarcely inclined to wrangle about their respective modes of faith or of worship. It was indifferent to them what shape the folly of the multitude might choose to assume; and they approached, with the same inward contempt and the same external reverence, the altars of the Libyan, the Olympian, or the Capitoline Jupiter.[8]

Of the magistrate

It is not easy to conceive from what motives a spirit of persecution could introduce itself into the Roman councils. The magistrates could not be actuated by a blind though honest bigotry, since the magistrates were themselves philosophers; and the schools of Athens had given laws to the senate. They could not be impelled by ambition or avarice, as the temporal and ecclesiastical powers were united in the same hands. The pontiffs were chosen among the most illustrious of the senators; and the office of Supreme Pontiff was constantly exercised by the emperors themselves. They knew and valued the advantages of religion, as it is connected with civil government. They encouraged the public festivals which humanize the manners of the people. They managed the arts of divination as a convenient instrument of policy; and they respected, as the firmest bond of society, the useful persuasion that, either in this or in a future life, the crime of perjury is most assuredly punished by the avenging gods.[9] But, whilst they acknowledged the general advantages of religion, they were convinced that the various modes of worship contributed alike to the same salutary purposes; and that, in every country, the form of superstition which had received the sanction of time and experience was the best adapted to the climate and to its inhabitants. Avarice and taste very frequently despoiled the vanquished nations of the elegant

[8] Socrates, Epicurus, Cicero, and Plutarch, always inculcated a decent reverence for the religion of their own country, and of mankind. The devotion of Epicurus was assiduous and exemplary. Diogen. Laert. x. 10. [In this passage nothing is said of the devotion of Epicurus. τῆς μὲν γὰρ πρὸς θεοὺς ὁσιότητος . . . ἄλεκτος ἡ διάθεσις seems to have been mistranslated.]

[9] Polybius, l. vi. c. 56. Juvenal, Sat. xiii., laments that in his time this apprehension had lost much of its effect.

statues of their gods and the rich ornaments of their temples;[10] but, in the exercise of the religion which they derived from their ancestors, they uniformly experienced the indulgence, and even protection, of the Roman conquerors. The province of Gaul seems, and indeed only seems, an exception to this universal toleration. Under the specious pretext of abolishing human sacrifices, the emperors Tiberius and Claudius suppressed the dangerous power of the Druids;[11] but the priests themselves, their gods, and their altars, subsisted in peaceful obscurity till the final destruction of Paganism.[12]

In the provinces

Rome, the capital of a great monarchy, was incessantly filled with subjects and strangers from every part of the world,[13] who all introduced and enjoyed the favourite superstitions of their native country.[14] Every city in the empire was justified in maintaining the purity of its ancient ceremonies; and the Roman senate, using the common privilege, sometimes interposed to check this inundation of foreign rites. The Egyptian superstition, of all the most contemptible and abject, was frequently prohibited; the temples of Serapis and Isis demolished, and their worshippers banished from Rome and Italy.[15] But the zeal of fanaticism prevailed over the cold and feeble efforts of policy. The exiles returned, the proselytes multiplied, the temples were restored with increasing splendour, and Isis and Serapis at length assumed their place among the Roman deities.[16] Nor was this indulgence a departure from the old maxims of government. In the purest ages of the commonwealth, Cybele

At Rome

[10] See the fate of Syracuse, Tarentum, Ambracia, Corinth, &c., the conduct of Verres, in Cicero (Actio ii. Orat. 4), and the usual practice of governors, in the viiith Satire of Juvenal.

[11] Sueton. in Claud. [25]—Plin. Hist. Nat. xxx. i.

[12] Pelloutier Histoire des Celtes, tom. vi. p. 230-252.

[13] Seneca Consolat. ad Helviam, p. 74 [6]. Edit. Lips.

[14] Dionysius Halicarn. Antiquitat. Roman., l. ii. [i. p. 275, Reiske].

[15] In the year of Rome 701, the temple of Isis and Serapis was demolished by the order of the senate (Dion Cassius, l. xl. p. 252 [47]), and even by the hands of the consul (Valerius Maximus, 1, 3). [But this passage in Valerius refers to the first demolition in B.C. 219.] After the death of Cæsar, it was restored at the public expense (Dion, l. xlvii. p. 501 [15]). When Augustus was in Egypt, he revered the majesty of Serapis (Dion, l. li. p. 647 [16]); but in the Pomærium of Rome, and a mile round it, he prohibited the worship of the Egyptian gods (Dion, l. liii. p. 697 [2], l. liv. p. 735 [6]). They remained, however, very fashionable under his reign (Ovid. de Art. Amand. l. i. [77]) and that of his successor, till the justice of Tiberius was provoked to some acts of severity. (See Tacit. Annal. ii. 85, Joseph. Antiquit. l. xviii. c. 3.)

[16] Tertullian in Apologetic. c. 6, p. 74. Edit. Havercamp. I am inclined to attribute their establishment to the devotion of the Flavian family.

and Æsculapius had been invited by solemn embassies ;[17] and it was customary to tempt the protectors of besieged cities by the promise of more distinguished honours than they possessed in their native country.[18] Rome gradually became the common temple of her subjects; and the freedom of the city was bestowed on all the gods of mankind.[19]

Freedom of Rome

II. The narrow policy of preserving without any foreign mixture the pure blood of the ancient citizens, had checked the fortune, and hastened the ruin, of Athens and Sparta. The aspiring genius of Rome sacrificed vanity to ambition, and deemed it more prudent, as well as honourable, to adopt virtue and merit for her own wheresoever they were found, among slaves or strangers, enemies or barbarians.[20] During the most flourishing æra of the Athenian commonwealth the number of citizens gradually decreased from about thirty[21] to twenty-one thousand.[22] If, on the contrary, we study the growth of the Roman republic, we may discover that, notwithstanding the incessant demands of wars and colonies, the citizens, who, in the first census of Servius Tullius, amounted to no more than eighty-three thousand,[23] were multiplied, before the commencement of the social war, to the number of four hundred and sixty-three thousand men able to bear arms in the service of their country.[24] When the allies of Rome claimed an equal share of honours and privileges, the senate indeed preferred the chance of arms to an ignominious concession. The Samnites and the Lucanians paid the severe penalty of their rashness; but the rest of the Italian states, as they successively returned to their duty, were admitted into the bosom of the republic,[25] and soon contributed to the ruin of public freedom. Under a democratical

[17] See Livy, l. xi. [12] and xxix. [11].

[18] Macrob. Saturnalia, l. iii. c. 9. He gives us a form of evocation.

[19] Minucius Felix in Octavio, p. 54. Arnobius, l. vi. p. 115.

[20] Tacit. Annal. xi. 24. The Orbis Romanus of the learned Spanheim is a complete history of the progressive admission of Latium, Italy, and the provinces to the freedom of Rome.

[21] Herodotus, v. 97. It should seem, however, that he followed a large and popular estimation.

[22] Athenæus Deipnosophist, l. vi. p. 272, Edit. Casaubon. Meursius de Fortunâ Atticâ, c. 4. [For the population of Athens, see Clinton's Fasti Hellenici, vol. i. p. 381, and Boeckh's Staatshaushaltung der Athener. But new light has been thrown on the Athenian as on other ancient populations by Beloch. He estimates the population of Athens c. 431 B.C. at 35,000.]

[23] [Perhaps about 20,000. See Mommsen, Hist. of Rome, i. 436, Eng. Tr.]

[24] See a very accurate collection of the numbers of each Lustrum in M. de Beaufort, République Romaine, l. iv. c. 4.

[25] Appian de Bell. civil. l. i. [53]. Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 15, 16, 17.

government the citizens exercise the powers of sovereignty; and those powers will be first abused, and afterwards lost, if they are committed to an unwieldy multitude. But, when the popular assemblies had been suppressed by the administration of the emperors, the conquerors were distinguished from the vanquished nations only as the first and most honourable order of subjects; and their increase, however rapid, was no longer exposed to the same dangers. Yet the wisest princes who adopted the maxims of Augustus guarded with the strictest care the dignity of the Roman name, and diffused the freedom of the city with a prudent liberality.[26]

Italy

Till the privileges of Romans had been progressively extended to all the inhabitants of the empire, an important distinction was preserved between Italy and the provinces. The former was esteemed the centre of public unity, and the firm basis of the constitution. Italy claimed the birth, or at least the residence, of the emperors and the senate.[27] The estates of the Italians were exempt from taxes, their persons from the arbitrary jurisdiction of governors. Their municipal corporations, formed after the perfect model of the capital,[28] were intrusted, under the immediate eye of the supreme power, with the execution of the laws. From the foot of the Alps to the extremity of Calabria, all the natives of Italy were born citizens of Rome. Their partial distinctions were obliterated, and they insensibly coalesced into one great nation, united by language, manners, and civil institutions, and equal to the weight of a powerful empire. The republic gloried in her generous policy, and was frequently rewarded by the merit and services of her adopted sons. Had she always confined the distinction of Romans to the ancient families within the walls of the city, that immortal name would have been deprived of some of its noblest ornaments. Virgil was a native of Mantua; Horace was inclined to doubt whether he should call himself an Apulian or a Lucanian; it was in Padua that an historian was found

[26] Mæcenas had advised him to declare, by one edict, all his subjects citizens. But we may justly suspect that the Historian Dion was the author of a counsel, so much adapted to the practice of his own age, and so little to that of Augustus.

[27] The senators were obliged to have one-third of their own landed property in Italy. See Plin. l. vi. ep. 19. The qualification was reduced by Marcus to one-fourth. Since the reign of Trajan, Italy had sunk nearer to the level of the provinces.

[28] [This statement is too strong. The municipal constitutions of the Italian towns were hardly created in a day. The old constitutions were modified by the new relation with Rome, but not abolished.]

worthy to record the majestic series of Roman victories. The patriot family of the Catos emerged from Tusculum; and the little town of Arpinum claimed the double honour of producing Marius and Cicero, the former of whom deserved, after Romulus and Camillus, to be styled the Third Founder of Rome; and the latter, after saving his country from the designs of Catiline, enabled her to contend with Athens for the palm of eloquence.[29]

The provinces of the empire (as they have been described in the preceding chapter) were destitute of any public force or constitutional freedom. In Etruria, in Greece,[30] and in Gaul,[31] it was the first care of the senate to dissolve those dangerous confederacies which taught mankind that, as the Roman arms prevailed by division, they might be resisted by union. Those princes whom the ostentation of gratitude or generosity permitted for a while to hold a precarious sceptre were dismissed from their thrones, as soon as they had performed their appointed task of fashioning to the yoke the vanquished nations. The free states and cities which had embraced the cause of Rome were rewarded with a nominal alliance, and insensibly sunk into real servitude. The public authority was everywhere exercised by the ministers of the senate and of the emperors, and that authority was absolute and without control. But the same salutary maxims of government, which had secured the peace and obedience of Italy, were extended to the most distant conquests. A nation of Romans was gradually formed in the provinces, by the double expedient of introducing colonies, and of admitting the most faithful and deserving of the provincials to the freedom of Rome. The provinces

"Wheresoever the Roman conquers, he inhabits," is a very just observation of Seneca,[32] confirmed by history and experience. The natives of Italy, allured by pleasure or by interest, hastened to enjoy the advantages of victory; and we may remark that, about forty years after the reduction of Asia, eighty thousand Romans were massacred in one day by the Colonies and municipal towns

[29] The first part of the Verona Illustrata of the Marquis Maffei gives the clearest and most comprehensive view of the state of Italy under the Cæsars.

[30] See Pausanias, l. vii. [16]. The Romans condescended to restore the names of those assemblies, when they could no longer be dangerous.

[31] They are frequently mentioned by Cæsar. The Abbé Dubos attempts, with very little success, to prove that the assemblies of Gaul were continued under the emperors. Histoire de l'Etablissement de la Monarchie Françoise, l. i. c. 4.

[32] Seneca in Consolat. ad Helviam, c. 6.

cruel orders of Mithridates.[33] These voluntary exiles were engaged for the most part in the occupations of commerce, agriculture, and the farm of the revenue. But after the legions were rendered permanent by the emperors, the provinces were peopled by a race of soldiers; and the veterans, whether they received the reward of their service in land or in money, usually settled with their families in the country where they had honourably spent their youth. Throughout the empire, but more particularly in the western parts, the most fertile districts and the most convenient situations were reserved for the establishment of colonies; some of which were of a civil and others of a military nature. In their manners and internal policy, the colonies formed a perfect representation of their great parent; and [as] they were soon endeared to the natives by the ties of friendship and alliance, they effectually diffused a reverence for the Roman name, and a desire which was seldom disappointed of sharing, in due time, its honours and advantages.[34] The municipal cities insensibly equalled the rank and splendour of the colonies; and in the reign of Hadrian it was disputed which was the preferable condition, of those societies which had issued from, or those which had been received into, the bosom of Rome.[35] The right of Latium, as it was called, conferred on the cities to which it had been granted a more partial favour. The magistrates only, at the expiration of their office, assumed the quality of Roman citizens; but as those offices were annual, in a few years they circulated round the principal families.[36] Those of the provincials who were permitted to bear arms in the legions;[37] those who exercised any civil employment; all, in a word, who performed any public service, or displayed any personal

[33] Memnon apud Photium, c. 33 [c. 31; Müller, *F.H.G.*, iii. p. 542]. Valer. Maxim. ix. 2. Plutarch [Sulla, 24] and Dion Cassius [fr. 99; vol. i. p. 342, ed. Melber] swell the massacre to 150,000 citizens; but I should esteem the smaller number to be more than sufficient.

[34] Twenty-five colonies were settled in Spain (see Plin. Hist. Natur. iii. 3, 4, iv. 35): and nine in Britain, of which London, Colchester, Lincoln, Chester, Gloucester, and Bath, still remain considerable cities (see Richard of Cirencester, p. 36, and Whitaker's History of Manchester, l. i. c. 3). The authority of Richard of Cirencester on Roman Britain is of no value. See Appendix 2.]

[35] Aul. Gell. Noctes Atticæ, xvi. 13. The Emperor Hadrian expressed his surprise that the cities of Utica, Gades, and Italica, which already enjoyed the rights of *Municipia*, should solicit the title of *colonies*. Their example, however, became fashionable, and the empire was filled with honorary colonies. See Spanheim, de Usu Numismatum. Dissertat. xiii. [For colonies, municipal towns and the right of Latium, see Appendix 8.]

[36] Spanheim, Orbis Roman. c. 8. p. 62.

[37] Aristid. in Romæ Encomio, tom. i. p. 218. Edit. Jebb.

talents, were rewarded with a present, whose value was continually diminished by the increasing liberality of the emperors. Yet even in the age of the Antonines, when the freedom of the city had been bestowed on the greater number of their subjects, it was still accompanied with very solid advantages. The bulk of the people acquired, with that title, the benefit of the Roman laws, particularly in the interesting articles of marriage, testaments, and inheritances; and the road of fortune was open to those whose pretensions were seconded by favour or merit. The grandsons of the Gauls who had besieged Julius Cæsar in Alesia commanded legions, governed provinces, and were admitted into the senate of Rome.[38] Their ambition, instead of disturbing the tranquillity of the state, was intimately connected with its safety and greatness.

Division of the Latin and the Greek provinces

So sensible were the Romans of the influence of language over national manners, that it was their most serious care to extend, with the progress of their arms, the use of the Latin tongue.[39] The ancient dialects of Italy, the Sabine, the Etruscan, and the Venetian, sunk into oblivion; but in the provinces, the east was less docile than the west to the voice of its victorious preceptors. This obvious difference marked the two portions of the empire with a distinction of colours, which, though it was in some degree concealed during the meridian splendour of prosperity, became gradually more visible as the shades of night descended upon the Roman world. The western countries were civilized by the same hands which subdued them. As soon as the barbarians were reconciled to obedience, their minds were opened to any new impressions of knowledge and politeness. The language of Virgil and Cicero, though with some inevitable mixture of corruption, was so universally adopted in Africa, Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Pannonia,[40] that the faint traces of the Punic or Celtic idioms were preserved only in the mountains, or among the peasants.[41] Education and study insensibly inspired the

[38] Tacit. Annal. xi. 23, 24. Hist. iv. 74.

[39] See Plin. Hist. Natur. iii. 5. Augustin. de Civitate Dei, xix. 7. Lipsius de pronunciatione Linguæ Latinæ, c. 3.

[40] Apuleius and Augustin will answer for Africa; Strabo for Spain and Gaul; Tacitus, in the life of Agricola, for Britain; and Velleius Paterculus, for Pannonia. To them we may add the language of the Inscriptions. [The statement in the text needs modification especially in regard to Britain.]

[41] The Celtic was preserved in the mountains of Wales, Cornwall, and Armorica We may observe that Apuleius reproaches an African youth, who lived among the populace, with the use of the Punic; whilst he had almost forgot Greek, and neither could nor would speak Latin. (Apolog. p. 596.) The greater part of St. Austin's congregations were strangers to the Punic.

natives of those countries with the sentiments of Romans; and Italy gave fashions, as well as laws, to her Latin provincials. They solicited with more ardour, and obtained with more facility, the freedom and honours of the state; supported the national dignity in letters[42] and in arms; and, at length, in the person of Trajan, produced an emperor whom the Scipios would not have disowned for their countryman. The situation of the Greeks was very different from that of the barbarians. The former had been long since civilized and corrupted. They had too much taste to relinquish their language, and too much vanity to adopt any foreign institutions. Still preserving the prejudices, after they had lost the virtues, of their ancestors, they affected to despise the unpolished manners of the Roman conquerors, whilst they were compelled to respect their superior wisdom and power.[43] Nor was the influence of the Grecian language and sentiments confined to the narrow limits of that once celebrated country. Their empire, by the progress of colonies and conquest, had been diffused from the Hadriatic to the Euphrates and the Nile. Asia was covered with Greek cities, and the long reign of the Macedonian kings had introduced a silent revolution into Syria and Egypt. In their pompous courts those princes united the elegance of Athens with the luxury of the East, and the example of the court was imitated, at an humble distance, by the higher ranks of their subjects. Such was the general division of the Roman empire into the Latin and Greek languages. To these we may add a third distinction for the body of the natives in Syria, and especially in Egypt. The use of their ancient dialects, by secluding them from the commerce of mankind, checked the improvements of those barbarians.[44] The slothful effeminacy of the former exposed them to the contempt, the sullen ferociousness of the latter excited the aversion, of the conquerors.[45] Those nations had submitted to the Roman power, but they seldom desired or deserved the freedom of the city; and it was remarked that more than two hundred and

[42] Spain alone produced Columella, the Senecas, Lucan, Martial, and Quintiliar [but *not*, as far as we know, Silius Italicus, who, if his name really connected him with Italica, must have been *Italicanus*].

[43] There is not, I believe, from Dionysius to Libanius, a single Greek critic who mentions Virgil or Horace. They seem ignorant that the Romans had any good writers.

[44] The curious reader may see in Dupin (Bibliothèque Ecclésiastique, tom. xix. p. 1, c. 8), how much the use of the Syriac and Egyptian languages was still preserved.

[45] See Juvenal, Sat. iii. and xv. Ammian. Marcellin. xxii. 16.

thirty years elapsed after the ruin of the Ptolemies, before an Egyptian was admitted into the senate of Rome.[46]

General use of both languages

It is a just though trite observation, that victorious Rome was herself subdued by the arts of Greece. Those immortal writers who still command the admiration of modern Europe soon became the favourite object of study and imitation in Italy and the western provinces. But the elegant amusements of the Romans were not suffered to interfere with their sound maxims of policy. Whilst they acknowledged the charms of the Greek, they asserted the dignity of the Latin, tongue, and the exclusive use of the latter was inflexibly maintained in the administration of civil as well as military government.[47] The two languages exercised at the same time their separate jurisdiction throughout the empire: the former, as the natural idiom of science; the latter, as the legal dialect of public transactions. Those who united letters with business were equally conversant with both; and it was almost impossible, in any province, to find a Roman subject, of a liberal education, who was at once a stranger to the Greek and to the Latin language.

Slaves

Their treatment

It was by such institutions that the nations of the empire insensibly melted away into the Roman name and people. But there still remained, in the centre of every province and of every family, an unhappy condition of men who endured the weight, without sharing the benefits, of society. In the free states of antiquity the domestic slaves were exposed to the wanton rigour of despotism. The perfect settlement of the Roman empire was preceded by ages of violence and rapine. The slaves consisted, for the most part, of barbarian captives, taken in thousands by the chance of war, purchased at a vile price,[48] accustomed to a life of independence, and impatient to break and to revenge their fetters. Against such internal enemies, whose desperate insurrections had more than once reduced the republic to the brink of destruction,[49] the most severe regulations[50] and the most cruel treatment seemed almost justified by the great law of self-preservation. But when the principal nations of Europe, Asia,

[46] Dion Cassius, l. lxxvi. p. 1275 [5]. The first instance happened under the reign of Septimius Severus.

[47] See Valerius Maximus, l. ii. c. 2, n. 2. The Emperor Claudius disfranchised an eminent Grecian for not understanding Latin. He was probably in some public office. Suetonius in Claud. c. 16.

[48] In the camp of Lucullus, an ox sold for a drachma, and a slave for four drachmæ, or about three shillings. Plutarch, in Lucull. p. 580 [14]. [Compare Dureau de la Malle, *Econ. Pol. des Romains*, i. 15.]

[49] Diodorus Siculus in Eclog. Hist. l. xxxiv. and xxxvi. Florus, iii. 19, 20.

[50] See a remarkable instance of severity, in Cicero in Verrem, v. 3.

and Africa were united under the laws of one sovereign, the source of foreign supplies flowed with much less abundance, and the Romans were reduced to the milder but more tedious method of propagation. In their numerous families, and particularly in their country estates, they encouraged the marriage of their slaves. The sentiments of nature, the habits of education, and the possession of a dependent species of property, contributed to alleviate the hardships of servitude.[51] The existence of a slave became an object of greater value, and though his happiness still depended on the temper and circumstances of the master, the humanity of the latter, instead of being restrained by fear, was encouraged by the sense of his own interest. The progress of manners was accelerated by the virtue or policy of the emperors; and by the edicts of Hadrian and the Antonines the protection of the laws was extended to the most abject part of mankind. The jurisdiction of life and death over the slaves, a power long exercised and often abused, was taken out of private hands, and reserved to the magistrates alone. The subterraneous prisons were abolished; and, upon a just complaint of intolerable treatment, the injured slave obtained either his deliverance or a less cruel master.[52]

Enfranchisement

Hope, the best comfort of our imperfect condition, was not denied to the Roman slave; and, if he had any opportunity of making himself either useful or agreeable, he might very naturally expect that the diligence and fidelity of a few years would be rewarded with the inestimable gift of freedom. The benevolence of the master was so frequently prompted by the meaner suggestions of vanity and avarice, that the laws found it more necessary to restrain than to encourage a profuse and undistinguishing liberality, which might degenerate into a very dangerous abuse.[53] It was a maxim of ancient jurisprudence, that a slave had not any country of his own; he acquired with his liberty an admission into the political society of which his patron was a member. The consequences of this maxim would have prostituted the privileges of the Roman city to a mean and promiscuous multitude. Some seasonable exceptions were therefore provided; and the honourable distinction was confined

[51] See in Gruter, and the other collectors, a great number of inscriptions addressed by slaves to their wives, children, fellow-servants, masters, &c. They are all most probably of the Imperial age.

[52] See the Augustan History [1, 18], and a dissertation of M. de Burigny, in the xxxvth volume of the Academy of Inscriptions, upon the Roman slaves.

[53] See another dissertation of M. de Burigny in the xxxviith volume, on the Roman freedmen.

to such slaves only as, for just causes, and with the approbation of the magistrate, should receive a solemn and legal manumission. Even these chosen freedmen obtained no more than the private rights of citizens, and were rigorously excluded from civil or military honours. Whatever might be the merit or fortune of their sons, *they* likewise were esteemed unworthy of a seat in the senate; nor were the traces of a servile origin allowed to be completely obliterated till the third or fourth generation.[54] Without destroying the distinction of ranks, a distant prospect of freedom and honours was presented, even to those whom pride and prejudice almost disdained to number among the human species.

Numbers

It was once proposed to discriminate the slaves by a peculiar habit, but it was justly apprehended that there might be some danger in acquainting them with their own numbers.[55] Without interpreting, in their utmost strictness, the liberal appellations of legions and myriads,[56] we may venture to pronounce that the proportion of slaves, who were valued as property, was more considerable than that of servants, who can be computed only as an expense.[57] The youths of a promising genius were instructed in the arts and sciences, and their price was ascertained by the degree of their skill and talents.[58] Almost every profession, either liberal[59] or mechanical, might be found in the household of an opulent senator. The ministers of pomp and sensuality were multiplied beyond the conception of modern luxury.[60] It was more for the interest of the merchant or manufacturer to purchase than to hire his workmen; and in the country slaves were employed as the cheapest and most laborious instruments of agriculture. To confirm the general observation, and to display the multitude of slaves, we might allege a variety of particular instances. It was discovered, on a very melancholy occasion, that four hundred slaves were maintained in a single palace

[54] Spanheim, Orbis Roman. l. i. c. 16. p. 124, &c.

[55] Seneca de Clementiâ, l. i. c. 24. The original is much stronger, "Quantum periculum immineret si servi nostri numerare nos cœpissent".

[56] See Pliny (Hist. Natur. l. xxxiii.) and Athenæus (Deipnosophist, l. vi. p. 272). The latter boldly asserts that he knew very many (πάμπολλοι) Romans who possessed, not for use, but ostentation, ten and even twenty thousand slaves.

[57] In Paris there are not more than 43,700 domestics of every sort, and not a twelfth part of the inhabitants. Messange, Recherches sur la Population, p. 186.

[58] A learned slave sold for many hundred pounds sterling; Atticus always bred and taught them himself. Cornel. Nepos in Vit. c. 13.

[59] Many of the Roman physicians were slaves. See Dr. Middleton's Dissertation and Defence. [On the state of Physicians among the Old Romans, 1734.]

[60] Their ranks and offices are very copiously enumerated by Pignorius de Servis. [For whole subject cp. Wallon, Hist. de l'Esclavage.]

of Rome.[61] The same number of four hundred belonged to an estate, which an African widow, of a very private condition, resigned to her son, whilst she reserved for herself a much larger share of her property.[62] A freedman, under the reign of Augustus, though his fortune had suffered great losses in the civil wars, left behind him three thousand six hundred yoke of oxen, two hundred and fifty thousand head of smaller cattle, and, what was almost included in the description of cattle, four thousand one hundred and sixteen slaves.[63]

Populousness of the Roman empire

The number of subjects who acknowledged the laws of Rome, of citizens, of provincials, and of slaves, cannot now be fixed with such a degree of accuracy as the importance of the object would deserve.[64] We are informed that, when the emperor Claudius exercised the office of censor, he took an account of six millions nine hundred and forty-five thousand Roman citizens, who, with the proportion of women and children, must have amounted to about twenty millions of souls. The multitude of subjects of an inferior rank was uncertain and fluctuating. But, after weighing with attention every circumstance which could influence the balance, it seems probable that there existed, in the time of Claudius, about twice as many provincials as there were citizens, of either sex and of every age; and that the slaves were at least equal in number to the free inhabitants of the Roman world. The total amount of this imperfect calculation would rise to about one hundred and twenty millions of persons: a degree of population which possibly exceeds that of modern Europe,[65] and forms the most numerous society that has ever been united under the same system of government.

[61] Tacit. Annal. xiv. 43. They all were executed for not preventing their master's murder.

[62] Apuleius in Apolog. p. 548. Edit. Delphin.

[63] Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xxxiii. 47.

[64] [The subject of the population of the Roman empire has been discussed in detail in Dureau de la Malle's Economie Politique, on which work Merivale's investigation is based (History of the Romans under the Empire, chap. 39). Merivale reckons the entire population under Augustus, "including both sexes, all ages and every class of inhabitants," at eighty-five millions, of which forty fall to the European, forty-five to the Asiatic provinces. In the present day the total population of these European lands is two and a half times as great. Gibbon's calculation is, on any theory, far too large.]

[65] Compute twenty millions in France, twenty-two in Germany, four in Hungary, ten in Italy with its islands, eight in Great Britain and Ireland, eight in Spain and Portugal, ten or twelve in the European Russia, six in Poland, six in Greece and Turkey, four in Sweden, three in Denmark and Norway, four in the Low Countries. The whole would amount to one hundred and five, or one hundred and seven millions. See Voltaire, de l'Histoire Générale. [The present population of Europe is somewhat about three hundred and fifty millions.]

Obedience and union

Domestic peace and union were the natural consequences of the moderate and comprehensive policy embraced by the Romans. If we turn our eyes towards the monarchies of Asia, we shall behold despotism in the centre and weakness in the extremities; the collection of the revenue, or the administration of justice, enforced by the presence of an army; hostile barbarians, established in the heart of the country, hereditary satraps usurping the dominion of the provinces and subjects, inclined to rebellion, though incapable of freedom. But the obedience of the Roman world was uniform, voluntary, and permanent. The vanquished nations, blended into one great people, resigned the hope, nay even the wish, of resuming their independence, and scarcely considered their own existence as distinct from the existence of Rome. The established authority of the emperors pervaded without an effort the wide extent of their dominions, and was exercised with the same facility on the banks of the Thames, or of the Nile, as on those of the Tiber. The legions were destined to serve against the public enemy, and the civil magistrate seldom required the aid of a military force.[66] In this state of general security, the leisure as well as opulence both of the prince and people were devoted to improve and to adorn the Roman empire.

Roman monuments

Among the innumerable monuments of architecture constructed by the Romans, how many have escaped the notice of history, how few have resisted the ravages of time and barbarism! And yet even the majestic ruins that are still scattered over Italy and the provinces would be sufficient to prove that those countries were once the seat of a polite and powerful empire. Their greatness alone, or their beauty, might deserve our attention; but they are rendered more interesting by two important circumstances, which connect the agreeable history of the arts with the more useful history of human manners. Many of those works were erected at private expense, and almost all were intended for public benefit.

Many of them erected at private expense

It is natural to suppose that the greatest number, as well as the most considerable of the Roman edifices, were raised by the emperors, who possessed so unbounded a command both of men and money. Augustus was accustomed to boast that he had found his capital of brick, and that he had left it of marble.[67]

[66] Joseph de Bell. Judaico. l. ii. c. 16. The oration of Agrippa, or rather of the historian, is a fine picture of the Roman empire.

[67] Sueton. in August. c. 28. Augustus built in Rome the temple and forum of Mars the Avenger; the Temple of Jupiter Tonans in the capitol; that of

The strict economy of Vespasian was the source of his magnificence. The works of Trajan bear the stamp of his genius. The public monuments with which Hadrian adorned every province of the empire were executed not only by his orders, but under his immediate inspection. He was himself an artist; and he loved the arts, as they conduced to the glory of the monarch. They were encouraged by the Antonines, as they contributed to the happiness of the people. But if the emperors were the first, they were not the only architects of their dominions. Their example was universally imitated by their principal subjects, who were not afraid of declaring that they had spirit to conceive, and wealth to accomplish, the noblest undertakings. Scarcely had the proud structure of the Coliseum been dedicated at Rome, before the edifices of a smaller scale indeed, but of the same design and materials, were erected for the use, and at the expense, of the cities of Capua and Verona.[68] The inscription of the stupendous bridge of Alcantara attests that it was thrown over the Tagus by the contribution of a few Lusitanian communities. When Pliny was intrusted with the government of Bithynia and Pontus, provinces by no means the richest or most considerable of the empire, he found the cities within his jurisdiction striving with each other in every useful and ornamental work that might deserve the curiosity of strangers or the gratitude of their citizens. It was the duty of the Proconsul to supply their deficiencies, to direct their taste, and sometimes to moderate their emulation.[69] The opulent senators of Rome and the provinces esteemed it an honour, and almost an obligation, to adorn the splendour of their age and country; and the influence of fashion very frequently supplied the want of taste or generosity. Among a crowd of these private benefactors, we may select Herodes Atticus, an Athenian citizen, who lived in the age of the Antonines. Whatever might be the motive of his conduct, his magnificence would have been worthy of the greatest kings.

Apollo Palatine, with public libraries; the portico and basilica of Caius and Lucius; the porticoes of Livia and Octavia, and the theatre of Marcellus. The example of the sovereign was imitated by his ministers and generals; and his friend Agrippa left behind him the immortal monument of the Pantheon.

[68] See Maffei, Verona illustrata, . iv. p. 68.

[69] See the xth book of Pliny's Epistles. He mentions the following works, carried on at the expense of the cities. At Nicomedia, a new forum, an aqueduct, and a canal, left unfinished by a king; at Nice, a Gymnasium and a theatre, which had already cost near ninety thousand pounds; baths at Prusa and Claudiopolis; and an aqueduct of sixteen miles in length for the use of Sinope.

Example of Herodes Atticus

The family of Herod, at least after it had been favoured by fortune, was lineally descended from Cimon and Miltiades, Theseus and Cecrops, Æacus and Jupiter. But the posterity of so many gods and heroes was fallen into the most abject state. His grandfather had suffered by the hands of justice, and Julius Atticus, his father, must have ended his life in poverty and contempt, had he not discovered an immense treasure buried under an old house, the last remains of his patrimony. According to the rigour of law, the emperor might have asserted his claim; and the prudent Atticus prevented, by a frank confession, the officiousness of informers. But the equitable Nerva, who then filled the throne, refused to accept any part of it, and commanded him to use, without scruple, the present of fortune. The cautious Athenian still insisted that the treasure was too considerable for a subject, and that he knew not how to *use it*. *Abuse it then*, replied the monarch, with a good-natured peevishness; for it is your own.[70] Many will be of opinion that Atticus literally obeyed the emperor's last instructions, since he expended the greatest part of his fortune, which was much increased by an advantageous marriage, in the service of the Public. He had obtained for his son Herod the prefecture of the free cities of Asia; and the young magistrate, observing that the town of Troas was indifferently supplied with water, obtained from the munificence of Hadrian three hundred myriads of drachms (about a hundred thousand pounds) for the construction of a new aqueduct. But in the execution of the work the charge amounted to more than double the estimate, and the officers of the revenue began to murmur, till the generous Atticus silenced their complaints by requesting that he might be permitted to take upon himself the whole additional expense.[71]

His reputation

The ablest preceptors of Greece and Asia had been invited by liberal rewards to direct the education of young Herod. Their pupil soon became a celebrated orator in the useless rhetoric of that age, which, confining itself to the schools, disdained to visit either the Forum or the Senate. He was honoured with the consulship at Rome; but the greatest part of his life was spent in a philosophic retirement at Athens, and his adjacent villas;

[70] Hadrian afterwards made a very equitable regulation, which divided all treasure trove between the right of property and that of discovery. Hist. August. p. 9 [i. 18].

[71] Philostrat. in Vit. Sophist. l. ii. p. 548. [We cannot implicitly trust the statements of Philostratus, the biographer of Herodes, for he was also the biographer of Apollonius of Tyana.]

perpetually surrounded by sophists, who acknowledged, without reluctance, the superiority of a rich and generous rival.[72] The monuments of his genius have perished; some remains still preserve the fame of his taste and munificence: modern travellers have measured the remains of the stadium which he constructed at Athens. It was six hundred feet in length, built entirely of white marble, capable of admitting the whole body of the people, and finished in four years, whilst Herod was president of the Athenian games. To the memory of his wife Regilla he dedicated a theatre, scarcely to be paralleled in the empire: no wood except cedar very curiously carved, was employed in any part of the building. The Odeum, designed by Pericles for musical performances and the rehearsal of new tragedies, had been a trophy of the victory of the arts over Barbaric greatness; as the timbers employed in the construction consisted chiefly of the masts of the Persian vessels. Notwithstanding the repairs bestowed on that ancient edifice by a king of Cappadocia, it was again fallen to decay. Herod restored its ancient beauty and magnificence.[73] Nor was the liberality of that illustrious citizen confined to the walls of Athens. The most splendid ornaments bestowed on the temple of Neptune in the Isthmus, a theatre at Corinth, a stadium at Delphi, a bath at Thermopylæ, and an aqueduct at Canusium in Italy, were insufficient to exhaust his treasures. The people of Epirus, Thessaly, Eubœa, Bœotia, and Peloponnesus, experienced his favours; and many inscriptions of the cities of Greece and Asia gratefully style Herodes Atticus their patron and benefactor.[74]

Most of the Roman monuments for public use: temples, theatres, aqueducts, etc.

In the commonwealths of Athens and Rome, the modest simplicity of private houses announced the equal condition of freedom; whilst the sovereignty of the people was represented in the majestic edifices destined to the public use:[75] nor was this republican spirit totally extinguished by the introduction of wealth and monarchy. It was in works of national honour and benefit that the most virtuous of the emperors affected to display their magnificence. The golden palace of Nero excited a

[72] Aulus Gellius, in Noct. Attic. i. 2, ix. 2, xviii. 10, xix. 12. Philostrat. p. 564 [ii. 14].

[73] [The Odeum of Herodes is here wrongly distinguished from his theatre and confounded with the Odeum of Pericles. The latter, which has disappeared, was close to the Theatre of Dionysus, but on the east side; that of Herodes, of which there are still ample remains, was on the west (S. W. of the Acropolis).]

[74] See Philostrat. l. ii. p. 548, 560 [3 *sqq.*]. Pausanias l. i. [19] and vii. 20. The life of Herodes, in the xxxth volume of the Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions.

[75] It is particularly remarked of Athens by Dicæarchus, de Statu Græciæ, p. 8, nter Geographos Minores, edit. Hudson.

just indignation, but the vast extent of ground which had been usurped by his selfish luxury was more nobly filled under the succeeding reigns by the Coliseum, the baths of Titus, the Claudian portico, and the temples dedicated to the goddess of Peace and to the genius of Rome.[76] These monuments of architecture, the property of the Roman people, were adorned with the most beautiful productions of Grecian painting and sculpture; and in the temple of Peace a very curious library was open to the curiosity of the learned. At a small distance from thence was situated the Forum of Trajan. It was surrounded with a lofty portico in the form of a quadrangle, into which four triumphal arches opened a noble and spacious entrance: in the centre arose a column of marble, whose height of one hundred and ten feet denoted the elevation of the hill that had been cut away. This column, which still subsists in its ancient beauty, exhibited an exact representation of the Dacian victories of its founder. The veteran soldier contemplated the story of his own campaigns, and, by an easy illusion of national vanity, the peaceful citizen associated himself to the honours of the triumph. All the other quarters of the capital, and all the provinces of the empire, were embellished by the same liberal spirit of public magnificence, and were filled with amphitheatres, theatres, temples, porticos, triumphal arches, baths and aqueducts, all variously conducive to the health, the devotion, and the pleasures of the meanest citizen. The last mentioned of those edifices deserve our peculiar attention. The boldness of the enterprise, the solidity of the execution, and the uses to which they were subservient, rank the aqueducts among the noblest monuments of Roman genius and power. The aqueducts of the capital claim a just pre-eminence; but the curious traveller, who, without the light of history, should examine those of Spoleto, of Metz, or of Segovia, would very naturally conclude that those provincial towns had formerly been the residence of some potent monarch. The solitudes of Asia and Africa were once covered with flourishing cities, whose populousness, and even whose existence, was derived from such artificial supplies of a perennial stream of fresh water.[77]

[76] Donatus de Roma Vetere, l. iii. c. 4, 5, 6, Nardini Roma Antica, l. iii. 11, 12, 13, and an MS. description of ancient Rome, by Bernardus Oricellarius, or Rucellas, of which I obtained a copy from the library of the Canon Ricardi at Florence. Two celebrated pictures of Timanthes and of Protogenes are mentioned by Pliny [xxxv. 36] as in the Temple of Peace; and the Laocoon was found in the baths of Titus. [The Temple of Peace was erected by Vespasian.]

[77] Montfaucon, l'Antiquité Expliquée, tom. iv. p. 2. l. i. c. 9. Fabretti has composed a very learned treatise on the aqueducts of Rome

Number and greatness of the cities of the empire

We have computed the inhabitants, and contemplated the public works, of the Roman empire. The observation of the number and greatness of its cities will serve to confirm the former and to multiply the latter. It may not be unpleasing to collect a few scattered instances relative to that subject, without forgetting, however, that, from the vanity of nations and the poverty of language, the vague appellation of city has been indifferently bestowed on Rome and upon Laurentum. I. In Italy *Ancient* Italy is said to have contained eleven hundred and ninety-seven cities; and, for whatsoever aera of antiquity the expression might be intended,[78] there is not any reason to believe the country less populous in the age of the Antonines, than in that of Romulus. The petty states of Latium were contained within the metropolis of the empire, by whose superior influence they had been attracted. Those parts of Italy which have so long languished under the lazy tyranny of priests and viceroys had been afflicted only by the more tolerable calamities of war; and the first symptoms of decay which *they* experienced were amply compensated by the rapid improvements of the Cisalpine Gaul. The splendour of Verona may be traced in its remains: yet Verona was less celebrated than Aquileia or Padua, Milan or Ravenna. Gaul and Spain II. The spirit of improvement had passed the Alps, and been felt even in the woods of Britain, which were gradually cleared away to open a free space for convenient and elegant habitations. York was the seat of government; London was already enriched by commerce; and Bath was celebrated for the salutary effects of its medicinal waters. Gaul could boast of her twelve hundred cities;[79] and, though, in the northern parts, many of them, without excepting Paris itself, were little more than the rude and imperfect townships of a rising people, the southern provinces imitated the wealth and elegance of Italy.[80] Many were the cities of Gaul, Marseilles, Arles, Nismes, Narbonne, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Autun, Vienne, Lyons, Langres, and Treves, whose ancient condition might sustain an equal, and perhaps advantageous, comparison with their present state. With regard to Spain, that country flourished as a province, and has declined as a kingdom. Exhausted by the abuse of her strength, by America, and by superstition, her pride might possibly be confounded, if

[78] Ælian Hist. Var. l. ix. c. 16. He lived in the time of Alexander Severus. See Fabricius, Biblioth. Græca, l. iv. c. 21.

[79] Joseph de Bell. Jud. ii. 16. The number, however, is mentioned and should be received with a degree of latitude.

[80] Plin. Hist. Natur. iii. 5.

we required such a list of three hundred and sixty cities as Pliny has exhibited under the reign of Vespasian.[81] III. Three hundred African cities had once acknowledged the authority of Carthage,[82] nor is it likely that their numbers diminished under the administration of the emperors: Carthage itself rose with new splendour from its ashes; and that capital, as well as Capua and Corinth, soon recovered all the advantages which can be separated from independent sovereignty. IV. The provinces of the east present the contrast of Roman magnificence with Turkish barbarism. The ruins of antiquity, scattered over uncultivated fields, and ascribed by ignorance to the power of magic, scarcely afford a shelter to the oppressed peasant or wandering Arab. Under the reign of the Cæsars, the proper Asia alone contained five hundred populous cities,[83] enriched with all the gifts of nature, and adorned with all the refinements of art. Eleven cities of Asia had once disputed the honour of dedicating a temple to Tiberius, and their respective merits were examined by the senate.[84] Four of them were immediately rejected as unequal to the burden; and among these was Laodicea, whose splendour is still displayed in its ruins.[85] Laodicea collected a very considerable revenue from its flocks of sheep, celebrated for the fineness of their wool, and had received, a little before the contest, a legacy of above four hundred thousand pounds by the testament of a generous citizen.[86] If such was the poverty of Laodicea, what must have been the wealth of those cities, whose claim appeared preferable, and particularly of Pergamus, of Smyrna, and of Ephesus, who so long disputed with each other the titular primacy of Asia?[87] The capitals of Syria and Egypt held a still superior rank

Africa

Asia

[81] Plin. Hist. Natur. iii. 3, 4. iv. 35. The list seems authentic and accurate: the division of the provinces and the different condition of the cities are minutely distinguished.

[82] Strabon. Geograph. l. xvii. p. 1189.

[83] Joseph. de Bell. Jud. ii. 16. Philostrat. in Vit. Sophist. l. ii. p. 548. Edit. Olear. [Life of Herodes, 3.]

[84] Tacit. Annal. iv. 55. I have taken some pains in consulting and comparing modern travellers, with regard to the fate of those eleven cities of Asia; seven or eight are totally destroyed, Hypæpe, Tralles, Laodicea, Ilium, Halicarnassus, Miletus, Ephesus, and we may add Sardis. Of the remaining three, Pergamus is a straggling village of two or three thousand inhabitants; Magnesia, under the name of Guzel-hissar, a town of some consequence; and Smyrna, a great city, peopled by a hundred thousand souls. But even at Smyrna, while the Franks have maintained commerce, the Turks have ruined the arts.

[85] See a very exact and pleasing description of the ruins of Laodicea, in Chandler's Travels through Asia Minor, p. 225, &c.

[86] Strabo, l. xii. p. 866. He had studied at Tralles.

[87] See a dissertation of M. de Bose, Mem. de l'Académie, tom. xviii. Aristides pronounced an oration which is still extant, to recommend concord to the rival cities.

in the empire: Antioch and Alexandria looked down with disdain on a crowd of dependent cities,[88] and yielded with reluctance to the majesty of Rome itself.

Roman roads

All these cities were connected with each other, and with the capital, by the public highways, which, issuing from the Forum of Rome, traversed Italy, pervaded the provinces, and were terminated only by the frontiers of the empire. If we carefully trace the distance from the wall of Antoninus to Rome, and from thence to Jerusalem, it will be found that the great chain of communication, from the north-west to the south-east point of the empire, was drawn out to the length of four thousand and eighty Roman miles.[89] The public roads were accurately divided by milestones, and ran in a direct line from one city to another, with very little respect for the obstacles either of nature or private property. Mountains were perforated, and bold arches thrown over the broadest and most rapid streams.[90] The middle part of the road was raised into a terrace which commanded the adjacent country, consisted of several strata of sand, gravel, and cement and was paved with large stones, or, in some places near the capital, with granite.[91] Such was the solid construction of the Roman highways, whose firmness has not entirely yielded to the effort of fifteen centuries. They united the subjects of the most distant provinces by an easy and familiar intercourse; but their primary object had been to facilitate the marches of the legions; nor was any country considered as completely subdued, till it had been rendered, in all its parts, pervious to the arms and authority of the conqueror.

Posts

The advantage of receiving the earliest intelligence, and of conveying their orders with celerity, induced the emperors to establish, throughout their extensive dominions, the regular institution

[88] The inhabitants of Egypt, exclusive of Alexandria, amounted to seven millions and a half (Joseph. de Bell. Jud. ii. 16). Under the military government of the Mamalukes, Syria was supposed to contain sixty thousand villages (Histoire de Timur Bec, l. v. c. 20).

[89] The following Itinerary may serve to convey some idea of the direction of the road, and of the distance between the principal towns. I. From the wall of Antoninus to York, 222 Roman miles. II. London 227. III. Rhutupiæ or Sandwich 67. IV. The navigation to Boulogne 45. V. Rheims 174. VI. Lyons 330. VII. Milan 324. VIII. Rome 426. IX. Brundusium 360. X. The navigation to Dyrrachium 40. XI. Byzantium 711. XII. Ancyra 283. XIII. Tarsus 301. XIV. Antioch 141. XV. Tyre 252. XVI. Jerusalem 168. In all 4080 Roman, or 3740 English miles. See the Itineraries published by Wesseling, his annotations; Gale and Stukeley for Britain, and M. d'Anville for Gaul and Italy.

[90] Montfaucon (l'Antiquité Expliquée, tom. iv. p. 2. l. i. c. 5.) has described the bridges of Narni, Alcantara, Nismes, &c.

[91] Bergier. Histoire des grands Chemins de l'Empire Romain, l. ii. c. 1-28.

of posts.[92] Houses were everywhere erected at the distance only of five or six miles; each of them was constantly provided with forty horses, and, by the help of these relays, it was easy to travel an hundred miles in a day along the Roman roads.[93] The use of the posts was allowed to those who claimed it by an Imperial mandate; but, though originally intended for the public service, it was sometimes indulged to the business or conveniency of private citizens.[94] Nor was the communication of the Roman empire less free and open by sea than it was by land. The provinces surrounded and enclosed the Mediterranean; and Italy, in the shape of an immense promontory, advanced into the midst of that great lake. The coasts of Italy are, in general, destitute of safe harbours; but human industry had corrected the deficiencies of nature; and the artificial port of Ostia, in particular, situate at the mouth of the Tiber, and formed by the Emperor Claudius, was an useful monument of Roman greatness.[95] From this port, which was only sixteen miles from the capital, a favourable breeze frequently carried vessels in seven days to the columns of Hercules, and in nine or ten to Alexandria in Egypt.[96]

Navigation

Whatever evils either reason or declamation have imputed to extensive empire, the power of Rome was attended with some beneficial consequences to mankind; and the same freedom of intercourse which extended the vices, diffused likewise the improvements, of social life. In the more remote ages of antiquity, the world was unequally divided. The east was in the immemorial possession of arts and luxury; whilst the west was inhabited by rude and warlike barbarians, who either disdained agriculture, or to whom it was totally unknown. Under the protection of an established government, the productions of happier climates and the industry of more civilized nations were gradually introduced into the western countries of Europe;

Improvement of agriculture in the western countries of the empire

[92] Procopius in Hist. Arcanâ, c. 30, Bergier Hist. des grands Chemins, l. iv. Codex Theodosian, l. viii. tit. v. vol. ii. p. 506-563, with Godefroy's learned commentary.

[93] In the time of Theodosius, Cæsarius, a magistrate of high rank, went post from Antioch to Constantinople. He began his journey at night, was in Cappadocia (165 miles from Antioch) the ensuing evening, and arrived at Constantinople the sixth day about noon. The whole distance was 725 Roman, or 665 English miles. See Libanius Orat. xxii. and the Itineraria, p. 572-581. [For the post-system or *cursus publicus* see the article under this title in Smith's Dict. of Antiquities; and Hudemann's Gesch. des röm. Postwesens.]

[94] Pliny, though a favourite and a minister, made an apology for granting post horses to his wife on the most urgent business, Epist. x. 121, 122.

[95] Bergier Hist. des grands Chemins, l. iv. c. 49.

[96] Plin. Hist. Natur. xix 1. [From Puteoli, Pliny says.]

and the natives were encouraged, by an open and profitable commerce, to multiply the former as well as to improve the latter. It would be almost impossible to enumerate all the articles, either of the animal or the vegetable reign, which were successively imported into Europe from Asia and Egypt;[97] but it will not be unworthy of the dignity, and much less of the utility, of an historical work, slightly to touch on a few of the principal heads. 1. Almost all the flowers, the herbs, and the fruits that grow in our European gardens are of foreign extraction, which, in many cases, is betrayed even by their names: the apple was a native of Italy, and, when the Romans had tasted the richer flavour of the apricot, the peach, the pomegranate, the citron, and the orange, they contented themselves with applying to all these new fruits the common denomination of apple, discriminating them from each other by the additional epithet of their country. 2. In the time of Homer, the vine grew wild in the island of Sicily and most probably in the adjacent continent; but it was not improved by the skill, nor did it afford a liquor grateful to the taste, of the savage inhabitants.[98] A thousand years afterwards, Italy could boast that, of the fourscore most generous and celebrated wines, more than two-thirds were produced from her soil.[99] The blessing was soon communicated to the Narbonnese province of Gaul; but so intense was the cold to the north of the Cevennes, that, in the time of Strabo, it was thought impossible to ripen the grapes in those parts of Gaul.[100] This difficulty, however, was gradually vanquished; and there is some reason to believe that the vineyards of Burgundy are as old as the age of the Antonines.[101] 3. The olive, in the western world, followed the progress of peace, of which it was considered as the symbol. Two centuries after the foundation of Rome, both Italy and Africa were strangers to that useful plant; it was naturalized in those countries; and at length carried into

Introduction of fruits, &c.

The vine

The olive

[97] It is not improbable that the Greeks and Phœnicians introduced some new arts and productions into the neighbourhood of Marseilles and Gades.

[98] See Homer Odyss. l. ix. v. 358.

[99] Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xiv. [11].

[100] Strab. Geograph. l. iv. p. 223. The intense cold of a Gallic winter was almost proverbial among the ancients. [Compare Cicero, *de Rep.*, iii. 9.]

[101] In the beginning of the ivth century, the orator Eumenius (Panegyric. Veter. viii. 6. edit. Delphin. [Incerti, *Grat. Actio Constantino Aug.*, viii. 6 ed. Bährens]) speaks of the vines in the territory of Autun, which were decayed through age, and the first plantation of which was totally unknown. The Pagus Arebrignus is supposed by M. d'Anville to be the district of Beaune, celebrated, even at present, for one of the first growths of Burgundy.

the heart of Spain and Gaul. The timid errors of the ancients, that it required a certain degree of heat, and could only flourish in the neighbourhood of the sea, were insensibly exploded by industry and experience.[102] 4. The cultivation of flax was transported from Egypt to Gaul, and enriched the whole country, however it might impoverish the particular lands on which it was sown.[103] 5. The use of artificial grasses became familiar to the farmers both of Italy and the provinces, particularly the Lucerne, which derived its name and origin from Media.[104] The assured supply of wholesome and plentiful food for the cattle during winter multiplied the number of the flocks and herds, which in their turn contributed to the fertility of the soil. To all these improvements may be added an assiduous attention to mines and fisheries, which, by employing a multitude of laborious hands, serve to increase the pleasures of the rich and the subsistence of the poor. The elegant treatise of Columella describes the advanced state of the Spanish husbandry, under the reign of Tiberius; and it may be observed that those famines which so frequently afflicted the infant republic were seldom or never experienced by the extensive empire of Rome. The accidental scarcity, in any single province, was immediately relieved by the plenty of its more fortunate neighbours.

Flax

Artificial grasses

General plenty

Agriculture is the foundation of manufactures; since the productions of nature are the materials of art. Under the Roman empire, the labour of an industrious and ingenious people was variously, but incessantly, employed in the service of the rich. In their dress, their table, their houses, and their furniture, the favourites of fortune united every refinement of conveniency, of elegance, and of splendour, whatever could soothe their pride or gratify their sensuality. Such refinements, under the odious name of luxury, have been severely arraigned by the moralists of every age; and it might perhaps be more conducive to the virtue, as well as happiness, of mankind, if all possessed the necessaries, and none the superfluities, of life. But in the present imperfect condition of society, luxury, though it may proceed from vice or folly, seems to be the only means that can correct the unequal distribution of property. The diligent mechanic, and the skilful artist, who have obtained no share in

Arts of luxury

[102] Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xv. [1].

[103] Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xix. [1, 2].

[104] See the agreeable Essays on Agriculture by Mr. Harte, in which he has collected all that the ancients and moderns have said of lucerne.

the division of the earth, receive a voluntary tax from the possessors of land; and the latter are prompted, by a sense of interest, to improve those estates, with whose produce they may purchase additional pleasures. This operation, the particular effects of which are felt in every society, acted with much more diffusive energy in the Roman world. The provinces would soon have been exhausted of their wealth, if the manufactures and commerce of luxury had not insensibly restored to the industrious subjects the sums which were exacted from them by the arms and authority of Rome. As long as the circulation was confined within the bounds of the empire, it impressed the political machine with a new degree of activity, and its consequences, sometimes beneficial, could never become pernicious.

Foreign trade

But it is no easy task to confine luxury within the limits of an empire. The most remote countries of the ancient world were ransacked to supply the pomp and delicacy of Rome. The forest of Scythia afforded some valuable furs. Amber was brought over land from the shores of the Baltic to the Danube; and the barbarians were astonished at the price which they received in exchange for so useless a commodity.[105] There was a considerable demand for Babylonian carpets, and other manufactures of the East; but the most important and unpopular branch of foreign trade was carried on with Arabia and India. Every year, about the time of the summer solstice, a fleet of an hundred and twenty vessels sailed from Myos-hormos, a port of Egypt, on the Red Sea. By the periodical assistance of the monsoons, they traversed the ocean in about forty days. The coast of Malabar, or the island of Ceylon,[106] was the usual term of their navigation, and it was in those markets that the merchants from the more remote countries of Asia expected their arrival. The return of the fleet of Egypt was fixed to the months of December or January; and as soon as their rich cargo had been transported on the backs of camels from the Red Sea to the Nile, and had descended that river as far as Alexandria, it was poured, without delay, into the capital of the empire.[107] The objects of oriental traffic were splendid and trifling: silk, a

[105] Tacit. Germania, c. 45. Plin. Hist. Natur. xxxvii. 11 [7]. The latter observed, with some humour, that even fashion had not yet found out the use of amber. Nero sent a Roman knight to purchase great quantities on the spot, where it was produced; the coast of modern Prussia.

[106] Called Taprobana by the Romans, and Serendib by the Arabs. It was discovered under the reign of Claudius, and gradually became the principal mart of the east.

[107] Plin. Hist. Natur. l. vi. [23]. Strabo, l. xvii. [p. 798].

pound of which was esteemed not inferior in value to a pound of gold ;[108] precious stones, among which the pearl claimed the first rank after the diamond ;[109] and a variety of aromatics, that were consumed in religious worship and the pomp of funerals.[110] The labour and risk of the voyage was rewarded with almost incredible profit; but the profit was made upon Roman subjects, and a few individuals were enriched at the expense of the Public. As the natives of Arabia and India were contented with the productions and manufactures of their own country, silver, on the side of the Romans, was the principal, if not the only, instrument of commerce. It was a complaint worthy of the gravity of the senate, that, in the purchase of female ornaments, the wealth of the state was irrecoverably given away to foreign and hostile nations.[111] The annual loss is computed, by a writer of an inquisitive but censorious temper, at upwards of eight hundred thousand pounds sterling.[112] Such was the style of discontent, brooding over the dark prospect of approaching poverty. And yet, if we compare the proportion between gold and silver, as it stood in the time of Pliny, and as it was fixed in the reign of Constantine, we shall discover within that period a very considerable increase.[113] There is not the least reason to suppose that gold was become more scarce; it is therefore evident that

Gold and silver

[108] Hist. August. p. 224 [xxvi. 45]. A silk garment was considered as an ornament to a woman, but as a disgrace to a man.

[109] The two great pearl fisheries were the same as at present, Ormuz and Cape Comorin. As well as we can compare ancient with modern geography, Rome was supplied with diamonds from the mine of Sumelpur, in Bengal, which is described in the Voyages de Tavernier, tom. ii. p. 281. [See Appendix 9.]

[110] [But the use of aromatic spices among the Romans was by no means confined to these purposes.]

[111] Tacit. Annal. iii. 53. In a speech of Tiberius. [The statement in the text is an exaggeration and must be considerably modified, as also the subsequent remark about the plentifulness of the precious metals. Silver was not the only, though it seems to have been the chief, commodity sent to the east; and there was certainly, as Merivale admits, a distinct though gradual diminution in the amount of gold and silver in circulation in the second century. Yet in regard to the first question, Gibbon had grasped facts; the spirit of his observation is right. "Two texts of Pliny assert the constant drain of specie to the East; and the assertion is confirmed by the circumstances of the case, for the Indians and the nations beyond India, who transmitted to the West their silks and spices, cared little for the wines and oils of Europe, still less for the manufactures in wool and leather which formed the staples of commerce in the Mediterranean. . . . The difficulty of maintaining the yield of the precious metals is marked in the severe regulations of the late emperors, and is further attested by the progressive debasement of the currency." (Merivale, Hist. of the Romans, cap. 68, vol. viii. p. 352). Cp. Finlay, History of Greece, i. 49, 50.]

[112] Plin. Hist. Natur. xii. 18. In another place he computes half that sum; Quingenties H. S. for India exclusive of Arabia.

[113] The proportion which was 1 to 10, and 12½, rose to 14⅖, the legal regulation of Constantine. See Arbuthnot's Table of ancient Coins, c. v.

silver was grown more common; that whatever might be the amount of the Indian and Arabian exports, they were far from exhausting the wealth of the Roman world; and that the produce of the mines abundantly supplied the demands of commerce.

General felicity

Notwithstanding the propensity of mankind to exalt the past, and to depreciate the present, the tranquil and prosperous state of the empire was warmly felt, and honestly confessed, by the provincials as well as Romans. "They acknowledged that the true principles of social life, laws, agriculture, and science, which had been first invented by the wisdom of Athens, were now firmly established by the power of Rome, under whose auspicious influence the fiercest barbarians were united by an equal government and common language. They affirm that, with the improvement of arts, the human species was visibly multiplied. They celebrate the increasing splendour of the cities, the beautiful face of the country, cultivated and adorned like an immense garden; and the long festival of peace, which was enjoyed by so many nations, forgetful of their ancient animosities, and delivered from the apprehension of future danger." [114] Whatever suspicions may be suggested by the air of rhetoric and declamation which seems to prevail in these passages, the substance of them is perfectly agreeable to historic truth.

Decline of courage;

It was scarcely possible that the eyes of contemporaries should discover in the public felicity the latent causes of decay and corruption. This long peace, and the uniform government of the Romans, introduced a slow and secret poison into the vitals of the empire. The minds of men were gradually reduced to the same level, the fire of genius was extinguished, and even the military spirit evaporated. The natives of Europe were brave and robust. Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Illyricum supplied the legions with excellent soldiers, and constituted the real strength of the monarchy. Their personal valour remained, but they no longer possessed that public courage which is nourished by the love of independence, the sense of national honour, the presence of danger, and the habit of command. They received laws and governors from the will of their sovereign, and trusted for their defence to a mercenary army. The posterity of their boldest leaders was contented with the rank of citizens and subjects. The most aspiring spirits resorted to the court or standard of the emperors; and the deserted provinces, deprived of political

[114] Among many other passages, see Pliny (Hist. Natur. iii. 5.), Aristides (de Urbe Româ) and Tertullian (de Animâ, c. 30.).

strength or union, insensibly sunk into the languid indifference of private life.

The love of letters, almost inseparable from peace and refine- of genius
ment, was fashionable among the subjects of Hadrian and the Antonines, who were themselves men of learning and curiosity. It was diffused over the whole extent of their empire; the most northern tribes of Britons had acquired a taste for rhetoric; Homer as well as Virgil were transcribed and studied on the banks of the Rhine and Danube; and the most liberal rewards sought out the faintest glimmerings of literary merit.[115] The sciences of physic and astronomy were successfully cultivated by the Greeks; the observations of Ptolemy and the writings of Galen are studied by those who have improved their discoveries and corrected their errors; but, if we except the inimitable Lucian, this age of indolence passed away without having produced a single writer of original genius or who excelled in the arts of elegant composition. The authority of Plato and Aristotle, of Zeno and Epicurus, still reigned in the schools, and their systems, transmitted with blind deference from one generation of disciples to another, precluded every generous attempt to exercise the powers, or enlarge the limits, of the human mind. The beauties of the poets and orators, instead of kindling a fire like their own, inspired only cold and servile imitations: or, if any ventured to deviate from those models, they deviated at the same time from good sense and propriety. On the revival of letters, the youthful vigour of the imagination after a long repose, national emulation, a new religion, new languages, and a new world, called forth the genius of Europe. But the provincials of Rome, trained by a uniform artificial foreign education, were engaged in a very unequal competition with those bold ancients, who, by expresssing their genuine feelings in their native tongue, had already occupied every place of honour. The name of Poet

[115] Herodes Atticus gave the sophist Polemo above eight thousand pounds for three declamations. See Philostrat. l. i. p. 558 [Life of Herodes, 7]. The Antonines founded a school at Athens, in which professors of grammar, rhetoric, politics, and the four great sects of philosophy, were maintained at the public expense for the instruction of youth. The salary of a philosopher was ten thousand drachmæ, between three and four hundred pounds a year. Similar establishments were formed in the other great cities of the empire. See Lucian in Eunuch. tom. ii. p. 353. edit. Reitz. Philostrat. l. ii. p. 566. Hist. August. p. 21 [iii., 11]. Dion Cassius, l. lxxxi. p. 1195 [31]. Juvenal himself, in a morose satire, which in every line betrays his own disappointment and envy, is obliged, however, to say—O Juvenes, circumspicit et agitat [*leg.* stimulat] vos, Materiamque sibi Ducis indulgentia quaerit.—Satir. vii. 20. [Vespasian was the first to appoint salaried professors in Rome; Suetonius, in Vespas. 18.]

was almost forgotten; that of Orator was usurped by the sophists. A cloud of critics, of compilers, of commentators, darkened the face of learning, and the decline of genius was soon followed by the corruption of taste.

Degeneracy

The sublime Longinus, who in somewhat a later period, and in the court of a Syrian queen, preserved the spirit of ancient Athens, observes and laments this degeneracy of his contemporaries, which debased their sentiments, enervated their courage, and depressed their talents. "In the same manner," says he, "as some children always remain pigmies, whose infant limbs have been too closely confined; thus our tender minds, fettered by the prejudices and habits of a just servitude, are unable to expand themselves, or to attain that well-proportioned greatness which we admire in the ancients, who, living under a popular government, wrote with the same freedom as they acted." [116] This diminutive stature of mankind, if we pursue the metaphor, was daily sinking below the old standard, and the Roman world was indeed peopled by a race of pigmies, when the fierce giants of the north broke in and mended the puny breed. They restored a manly spirit of freedom; and, after the revolution of ten centuries, freedom became the happy parent of taste and science.

[116] Longin. de Sublim. c. 43, p. 229 edit. Toll. Here too we may say of Longinus, "his own example strengthens all his laws". Instead of proposing his sentiments with a manly boldness, he insinuates them with the most guarded caution, puts them into the mouth of a friend, and, as far as we can collect from a corrupted text, makes a show of refuting them himself. [The author calls him "sublime" in allusion to the work On Sublimity, περὶ ὕψους. But the authorship of this able and striking treatise is very doubtful; it is certain that it was not written by Zenobia's Longinus.]

CHAPTER III

Of the Constitution of the Roman Empire, in the Age of the Antonines

Idea of a monarchy

THE obvious definition of a monarchy seems to be that of a state, in which a single person, by whatsoever name he may be distinguished, is intrusted with the execution of the laws, the management of the revenue, and the command of the army. But unless public liberty is protected by intrepid and vigilant guardians, the authority of so formidable a magistrate will soon degenerate into despotism. The influence of the clergy, in an age of superstition, might be usefully employed to assert the rights of mankind; but so intimate is the connexion between the throne and the altar, that the banner of the church has very seldom been seen on the side of the people. A martial nobility and stubborn commons, possessed of arms, tenacious of property, and collected into constitutional assemblies, form the only balance capable of preserving a free constitution against enterprises of an aspiring prince.

Situation of Augustus

Every barrier of the Roman constitution had been leveled by the vast ambition of the dictator; every fence had been extirpated by the cruel hand of the triumvir. After the victory of Actium, the fate of the Roman world depended on the will of Octavianus, surnamed Cæsar by his uncle's adoption, and afterwards Augustus, by the flattery of the senate.[1] The conqueror was at the head of forty-four veteran legions,[2] conscious of their own strength and of the weakness of the constitution, habituated during twenty years' civil war to every act of blood and violence, and passionately devoted to the house of Cæsar, from whence alone they had received and expected the most lavish rewards. The provinces long oppressed by the ministers of the republic, sighed for the government of a single

[1] [His original name was C. Octavius, hence Merivale usually (incorrectly) speaks of him as Octavius. For he ceased to be an Octavius, and became a Julius, by his uncle's adoption; his full name in 44 B.C. was C. Julius Cæsar Octavianus. The title *Augustus* was conferred Jan. 16, 27 B.C.]

[2] Orosius, vi. 18.

person, who would be the master, not the accomplice, of those petty tyrants. The people of Rome, viewing with a secret pleasure the humiliation of the aristocracy, demanded only bread and public shows, and were supplied with both by the liberal hand of Augustus. The rich and polite Italians, who had almost universally embraced the philosophy of Epicurus, enjoyed the present blessings of ease and tranquillity, and suffered not the pleasing dream to be interrupted by the memory of their old tumultuous freedom. With its power, the senate had lost its dignity; many of the most noble families were extinct. The republicans of spirit and ability had perished in the field of battle, or in the proscription. The door of the assembly had been designedly left open for a mixed multitude of more than a thousand persons, who reflected disgrace upon their rank, instead of deriving honour from it.[3]

He reforms the senate

The reformation of the senate, was one of the first steps in which Augustus laid aside the tyrant, and professed himself the father of his country. He was elected censor; and, in concert with his faithful Agrippa, he examined the list of the senators, expelled a few members,[4] whose vices or whose obstinacy required a public example, persuaded near two hundred to prevent the shame of an expulsion by a voluntary retreat, raised the qualification of a senator to about ten thousand pounds, created a sufficient number of patrician families, and accepted for himself the honourable title of Prince of the Senate, which had always been bestowed by the censors on the citizen the most eminent for his honours and services.[5] But, whilst he thus restored the dignity, he destroyed the independence of the senate. The principles of a free constitution are irrecoverably lost, when the legislative power is nominated by the executive.

Resigns his usurped power

Before an assembly thus modelled and prepared, Augustus pronounced a studied oration, which displayed his patriotism, and disguised his ambition. "He lamented, yet excused, his past conduct. Filial piety had required at his hands the revenge of his father's murder; the humanity of his own nature had sometimes given way to the stern laws of necessity, and to a forced connexion with two unworthy colleagues: as long as Antony

[3] Julius Cæsar introduced soldiers, strangers and half-barbarians, into the senate. (Sueton. in Cæsar. c. 80.) The abuse became still more scandalous after his death.

[4] [But Dion, as Milman pointed out, says that he erased no senator's name from the list; see next note.]

[5] Dion Cassius, l. iii. p. 693 [42], Suetonius in August. c. 35. [But see Appendix 10.]

lived, the republic forbad him to abandon her to a degenerate Roman and a barbarian queen. He was now at liberty to satisfy his duty and his inclination. He solemnly restored the senate and people to all their ancient rights; and wished only to mingle with the crowd of his fellow-citizens, and to share the blessings which he had obtained for his country."[6]

Is prevailed upon to resume it under the title of emperor or general

It would require the pen of Tacitus (if Tacitus had assisted at this assembly) to describe the various emotions of the senate; those that were suppressed, and those that were affected. It was dangerous to trust the sincerity of Augustus; to seem to distrust it was still more dangerous. The respective advantages of monarchy and a republic have often divided speculative inquirers; the present greatness of the Roman state, the corruption of manners, and the licence of the soldiers, supplied new arguments to the advocates of monarchy; and these general views of government were again warped by the hopes and fears of each individual. Amidst this confusion of sentiments, the answer of the senate was unanimous and decisive. They refused to accept the resignation of Augustus; they conjured him not to desert the republic which he had saved. After a decent resistance the crafty tyrant submitted to the orders of the senate; and consented to receive the government of the provinces, and the general command of the Roman armies, under the well-known names of PROCONSUL and IMPERATOR.[7] But he would receive them only for ten years. Even before the expiration of that period, he hoped that the wounds of civil discord would be completely healed, and that the republic, restored to its pristine health and vigour, would no longer require the dangerous interposition of so extraordinary a magistrate. The memory of this comedy, repeated several times during the life of Augustus, was preserved to the last ages of the empire by the peculiar pomp with which the perpetual monarchs of Rome always solemnized the tenth years of their reign.[8]

[6] Dion, l. liii. p. 6983 [3], gives us a prolix and bombastic speech on this great occasion. I have borrowed from Suetonius and Tacitus the general language of Augustus.

[7] *Imperator* (from which we have derived emperor) signified under the republic no more than *general*, and was emphatically bestowed by the soldiers, when on the field of battle they proclaimed their victorious leader worthy of that title. When the Roman *emperors* assumed it in that sense, they placed it after their name, and marked how often they had taken it. [Thus, as an imperial title, *imperator* preceded the emperor's name, but *Imp. iii.* after his name meant that he was saluted Imperator by his troops for the third time, on the occasion of his second victory after his accession.]

[8] Dion, l. liii. p. 703, etc. [11, cp. 16.]

Power of the Roman generals

Without any violation of the principles of the constitution, the general of the Roman armies might receive and exercise an authority almost despotic over the soldiers, the enemies, and the subjects of the republic. With regard to the soldiers, the jealousy of freedom had, even from the earliest ages of Rome, given way to the hopes of conquest, and a just sense of military discipline. The dictator, or consul, had a right to command the service of the Roman youth, and to punish an obstinate or cowardly disobedience by the most severe and ignominious penalties, by striking the offender out of the list of citizens, by confiscating his property, and by selling his person into slavery.[9] The most sacred rights of freedom, confirmed by the Porcian and Sempronian laws, were suspended by the military engagement. In his camp the general exercised an absolute power of life and death; his jurisdiction was not confined by any forms of trial or rules of proceeding, and the execution of the sentence was immediate and without appeal.[10] The choice of the enemies of Rome was regularly decided by the legislative authority. The most important resolutions of peace and war were seriously debated in the senate, and solemnly ratified by the people. But when the arms of the legions were carried to a great distance from Italy, the generals assumed the liberty of directing them against whatever people, and in whatever manner, they judged most advantageous for the public service. It was from the success, not from the justice, of their enterprises, that they expected the honours of a triumph. In the use of victory, especially after they were no longer controlled by the commissioners of the senate, they exercised the most unbounded despotism. When Pompey commanded in the East, he rewarded his soldiers and allies, dethroned princes, divided kingdoms, founded colonies, and distributed the treasures of Mithridates. On his return to Rome he obtained, by a single act of the senate and people, the universal ratification of all his proceedings.[11]

[9] Liv. Epitom. l. xiv. Valer. Maxim. vi. 3.

[10] See in the viiith book of Livy, the conduct of Manlius Torquatus and Papirius Cursor. They violated the laws of nature and humanity, but they asserted those of military discipline; and the people, who abhorred the action, were obliged to respect the principle.

[11] By the lavish but unconstrained suffrages of the people, Pompey had obtained a military command scarcely inferior to that of Augustus. Among the extraordinary acts of power executed by the former, we may remark the foundation of twenty-nine cities, and the distribution of three or four millions sterling to his troops. The ratification of his acts met with some opposition and delays in the senate. See Plutarch, Appian, Dion Cassius, and the first book of the epistles to Atticus.

Such was the power over the soldiers, and over the enemies of Rome, which was either granted to, or assumed by, the generals of the republic. They were, at the same time, the governors, or rather monarchs, of the conquered provinces, united the civil with the military character, administered justice as well as the finances, and exercised both the executive and legislative power of the state.

Lieutenants of the emperor

From what has been already observed in the first chapter of this work, some notion may be formed of the armies and provinces thus intrusted to the ruling hand of Augustus. But, as it was impossible that he could personally command the legions of so many distant frontiers, he was indulged by the senate, as Pompey had already been, in the permission of devolving the execution of his great office on a sufficient number of lieutenants. In rank and authority these officers seemed not inferior to the ancient proconsuls; but their station was dependent and precarious. They received and held their commissions at the will of a superior, to whose *auspicious* influence the merit of their action was legally attributed.[12] They were the representatives of the emperor. The emperor alone was the general of the republic, and his jurisdiction, civil as well as military, extended over all the conquests of Rome. It was some satisfaction, however, to the senate that he always delegated his power to the members of their body. The imperial lieutenants were of consular or prætorian dignity; the legions were commanded by senators, and the præfecture of Egypt was the only important trust committed to a Roman knight.

Division of the provinces between the emperor and the senate

Within six days after Augustus had been compelled to accept so very liberal a grant, he resolved to gratify the pride of the senate by an easy sacrifice. He represented to them that they had enlarged his powers, even beyond that degree which might be required by the melancholy condition of the times. They had not permitted him to refuse the laborious command of the armies and the frontiers; but he must insist on being allowed to restore the more peaceful and secure provinces to the mild administration of the civil magistrate. In the division of the provinces Augustus provided for his own power and for the dignity of the republic. The proconsuls of the senate, particularly those

[12] Under the commonwealth, a triumph could only be claimed by the general, who was authorized to take the Auspices in the name of the people. By an exact consequence, drawn from this principle of policy and religion, the triumph was reserved to the emperor, and his most successful lieutenants were satisfied with some marks of distinction, which, under the name of triumphal honours, were invented in their favour. [On the provincial governors see Appendix 10.]

of Asia, Greece, and Africa, enjoyed a more honourable character than the lieutenants of the emperor, who commanded in Gaul or Syria. The former were attended by lictors, the latter by soldiers. A law was passed that, wherever the emperor was present, his extraordinary commission should supersede the ordinary jurisdiction of the governor; a custom was introduced, that the new conquests belonged to the imperial portion; and it was soon discovered that the authority of the *Prince*, the favourite epithet of Augustus, was the same in every part of the empire.

The former preserves his military command, and guards, in Rome itself

In return for this imaginary concession, Augustus obtained an important privilege, which rendered him master of Rome and Italy. By a dangerous exception to the ancient maxims, he was authorized to preserve his military command, supported by a numerous body of guards, even in time of peace, and in the heart of the capital.[13] His command, indeed, was confined to those citizens who were engaged in the service by the military oath; but such was the propensity of the Romans to servitude, that the oath was voluntarily taken by the magistrates, the senators, and the equestrian order, till the homage of flattery was insensibly converted into an annual and solemn protestation of fidelity.

Consular and tribunitian powers

Although Augustus considered a military force as the firmest foundation, he wisely rejected it as a very odious instrument, of government. It was more agreeable to his temper, as well as to his policy, to reign under the venerable names of ancient magistracy, and artfully to collect in his own person all the scattered rays of civil jurisdiction. With this view, he permitted the senate to confer upon him, for his life, the powers of the consular[14] and tribunitian offices,[15] which were, in the same manner, continued to all his successors. The consuls had succeeded to the kings of Rome, and represented the dignity of the state. They superintended the ceremonies of religion, levied and commanded the legions, gave audience to foreign ambassadors, and presided in the assemblies both of the senate and people. The general

[13] [The prætorian guards and the fleets (at Ravenna and Misenum) were the two exceptions to the principle that Italy was outside the jurisdiction of the *Imperator*].

[14] Cicero (de Legibus, iii. 3.) gives the consular office the name of *Regia potestas:* and Polybius (l. vi. c. 3.) observes three powers in the Roman constitution. The monarchical was represented and exercised by the consuls. [But see Appendix 10.]

[15] As the tribunitian power (distinct from the annual office) was first invented for the dictator Cæsar (Dion, l. xliv. p. 384 [5]), we may easily conceive, that it was given as a reward for having so nobly asserted, by arms, the sacred rights of the tribunes and people. See his own commentaries, de Bell. Civil. l. i.

control of the finances was intrusted to their care and, though they seldom had leisure to administer justice in person, they were considered as the supreme guardians of law, equity, and the public peace. Such was their ordinary jurisdiction; but whenever the senate empowered the first magistrate to consult the safety of the commonwealth, he was raised by that degree above the laws, and exercised, in the defence of liberty, a temporary despotism.[16] The character of the tribunes was, in every respect, different from that of the consuls. The appearance of the former was modest and humble; but their persons were sacred and inviolable. Their force was suited rather for opposition than for action. They were instituted to defend the oppressed, to pardon offences, to arraign the enemies of the people, and, when they judged it necessary, to stop, by a single word, the whole machine of government. As long as the republic subsisted, the dangerous influence which either the consul or the tribune might derive from their respective jurisdiction was diminished by several important restrictions. Their authority expired with the year in which they were elected; the former office was divided between two, the latter among ten persons; and, as both in their private and public interest they were adverse to each other, their mutual conflicts contributed, for the most part, to strengthen rather than to destroy the balance of the constitution. But when the consular and tribunitian powers were united,[17] when they were vested for life in a single person, when the general of the army was, at the same time, the minister of the senate and the representative of the Roman people, it was impossible to resist the exercise, nor was it easy to define the limits, of his imperial prerogative.

Imperial prerogatives

To these accumulated honours the policy of Augustus soon added the splendid as well as important dignities of supreme pontiff, and of censor.[18] By the former he acquired the management of the religion, and by the latter a legal inspection over the manners and fortunes, of the Roman people. If so many distinct and independent powers did not exactly unite with each other, the complaisance of the senate was prepared to

[16] Augustus exercised nine annual consulships without interruption. He then most artfully refused that magistracy as well as the dictatorship, absented himself from Rome, and waited till the fatal effects of tumult and faction forced the senate to invest him with a perpetual consulship. Augustus, as well as his successors, affected, however, to conceal so invidious a title.

[17] [But observe that the tribunate (as the author afterwards points out) was not discontinued, though, overshadowed by the *tribunicia potestas* of the emperor, it lost all political significance.]

[18] [See Appendix 10.]

supply every deficiency by the most ample and extraordinary concessions. The emperors, as the first ministers of the republic, were exempted from the obligation and penalty of many inconvenient laws: they were authorized to convoke the senate, to make several motions in the same day, to recommend candidates for the honours of the state, to enlarge the bounds of the city, to employ the revenue at their discretion, to declare peace and war, to ratify treaties; and by a most comprehensive clause, they were empowered to execute whatsoever they should judge advantageous to the empire, and agreeable to the majesty of things private or public, human or divine.[19]

The magistrates

When all the various powers of executive government were committed to the *Imperial magistrate*, the ordinary magistrates of the commonwealth languished in obscurity, without vigour, and almost without business. The names and forms of the ancient administration were preserved by Augustus with the most anxious care. The usual number of consuls, prætors, and tribunes[20] were annually invested with their respective ensigns of office, and continued to discharge some of their least important functions. Those honours still attracted the vain ambition of the Romans; and the emperors themselves, though invested for life with the powers of the consulship,[21] frequently aspired to the title of that annual dignity, which they condescended to share with the most illustrious of their fellow-citizens.[22] In the election of these magistrates, the people, during the reign of Augustus, were permitted to expose all the inconveniences of a wild democracy. That artful prince, instead of discovering the

[19] See a fragment of a Decree of the Senate, conferring on the Emperor Vespasian all the powers granted to his predecessors, Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius. This curious and important monument is published in Gruter's Inscriptions, No. ccxlii. [Corp. Insc. Lat. vi. 930. This document is known as the *lex de imperio Vespasiani*.]

[20] Two consuls were created on the Calends of January; but in the course of the year others were substituted in their places, till the annual number seems to have amounted to no less than twelve. The prætors were usually sixteen or eighteen (Lipsius in Excurs. D. ad. Tacit. Annal. l. i.). I have not mentioned the Ædiles or Quæstors. Officers of the police or revenue easily adapt themselves to any form of government. In the time of Nero the tribunes legally possessed the right of intercession, though it might be dangerous to exercise it (Tacit. Annal. xvi. 26). In the time of Trajan, it was doubtful whether the tribuneship was an office or a name (Plin. Epist. 123) [But it still existed in the 5th century, being mentioned in the Theodosian Code.]

[21] [See above note 11.]

[22] The tyrants themselves were ambitious of the consulship. The virtuous princes were moderate in the pursuit, and exact in the discharge, of it. Trajan revived the ancient oath, and swore before the consul's tribunal that he would observe the laws (Plin. Panegyric. c. 64).

least symptom of impatience, humbly solicited their suffrages for himself or his friends, and scrupulously practised all the duties of an ordinary candidate.[23] But we may venture to ascribe to his councils the first measure of the succeeding reign, by which the elections were transferred to the senate.[24] The assemblies of the people were for ever abolished, and the emperors were delivered from a dangerous multitude, who, without restoring liberty, might have disturbed, and perhaps endangered, the established government.

The senate

By declaring themselves the protectors of the people, Marius and Cæsar had subverted the constitution of their country. But as soon as the senate had been humbled and disarmed, such an assembly, consisting of five or six hundred persons, was found a much more tractable and useful instrument of dominion. It was on the dignity of the senate that Augustus and his successors founded their new empire; and they affected, on every occasion, to adopt the language and principles of Patricians. In the administration of their own powers, they frequently consulted the great national council, and *seemed* to refer to its decision the most important concerns of peace and war. Rome, Italy, and the internal provinces were subject to the immediate jurisdiction of the senate. With regard to civil objects, it was the supreme court of appeal; with regard to criminal matters, a tribunal, constituted for the trial of all offences that were committed by men in any public station, or that affected the peace and majesty of the Roman people. The exercise of the judicial power became the most frequent and serious occupation of the senate; and the important causes that were pleaded before them afforded a last refuge to the spirit of ancient eloquence. As a council of state, and as a court of justice, the senate possessed very considerable prerogatives; but in its legislative capacity, in which it was supposed virtually to represent the people, the rights of sovereignty were acknowledged to reside in that assembly. Every power was derived from their authority, every law was ratified by their sanction. Their regular meetings were held on three stated days in every month, the Calends, the

[23] Quoties Magistratuum Comitiis interesset, tribus cum candidatis suis circuibat; supplicabatque more solemni. Ferebat et ipse suffragium in tribubus, ut unus e populo. Suetonius in August. c. 56.

[24] Tum primum Comitia e campo ad patres translata sunt. Tacit. Annal. i. 15. The word *primum* seems to allude to some faint and unsuccessful efforts, which were made towards restoring them to the people. [One formality was still left to the popular assembly—the *renuntiatio* of the elected candidates. Gibbon's inference from *primum* is hardly tenable; but he is right in so far that Augustus had prepared the way for the change of Tiberius.]

Nones, and the Ides. The debates were conducted with decent freedom; and the emperors themselves, who gloried in the name of senators, sat, voted, and divided with their equals.

General idea of the Imperial system

To resume, in a few words, the system of the Imperial government, as it was instituted by Augustus, and maintained by those princes who understood their own interest and that of the people, it may be defined an absolute monarchy disguised by the forms of a commonwealth. The masters of the Roman world surrounded their throne with darkness, concealed their irresistible strength, and humbly professed themselves the accountable ministers of the senate, whose supreme decrees they dictated and obeyed.[25]

Court of the emperors

The face of the court corresponded with the forms of the administration. The emperors, if we except those tyrants whose capricious folly violated every law of nature and decency, disdained that pomp and ceremony which might offend their countrymen, but could add nothing to their real power. In all the offices of life, they affected to confound themselves with their subjects, and maintained with them an equal intercourse of visits and entertainments. Their habit, their palace, their table, were suited only to the rank of an opulent senator. Their family, however numerous or splendid, was composed entirely of their domestic slaves and freedmen.[26] Augustus or Trajan would have blushed at employing the meanest of the Romans in those menial offices which, in the household and bedchamber of a limited monarch, are so eagerly solicited by the proudest nobles of Britain.

Deification

The deification of the emperors[27] is the only instance in which they departed from their accustomed prudence and modesty. The Asiatic Greeks were the first inventors, the successors of Alexander[28] the first objects, of this servile and

[25] Dion Cassius (l. liii. p. 703-714 [12-18]) has given a very loose and partial sketch of the Imperial system. To illustrate and often to correct him, I have mentioned Tacitus, examined Suetonius, and consulted the following moderns: the Abbé de la Bléterie in the Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xix. xxi. xxiv. xxv. xxvii. Beaufort, République Romaine, tom. i. p. 255-275. The dissertations of Noodt and Gronovius, *de lege Regia*: printed at Leyden, in the year 1731. Gravina de Imperio Romano, p. 479-544 of his Opuscula. Maffei Verona Illustrata, p. i. p. 245, &c.

[26] A weak prince will always be governed by his domestics. The power of slaves aggravated the shame of the Romans; and the senate paid court to a Pallas or a Narcissus. There is a chance that a modern favourite may be a gentleman.

[27] See a treatise of Van Dale de Consecratione Principum. It would be easier for me to copy, than it has been to verify, the quotations of that learned Dutchman.

[28] [And Alexander himself.]

impious mode of adulation. It was easily transferred from the kings to the governors of Asia; and the Roman magistrates very frequently were adored as provincial deities, with the pomp of altars and temples, of festivals and sacrifices.[29] It was natural that the emperors should not refuse what the proconsuls had accepted; and the divine honours which both the one and the other received from the provinces attested rather the despotism than the servitude of Rome. But the conquerors soon imitated the vanquished nations in the arts of flattery; and the imperious spirit of the first Cæsar too easily consented to assume, during his life time, a place among the tutelar deities of Rome. The milder temper of his successor declined so dangerous an ambition, which was never afterwards revived, except by the madness of Caligula and Domitian. Augustus permitted indeed some of the provincial cities to erect temples to his honour, on condition that they should associate the worship of Rome with that of the sovereign; he tolerated private superstition, of which he might be the object;[30] but he contented himself with being revered by the senate and people in his human character, and wisely left to his successor the care of his public deification. A regular custom was introduced, that, on the decease of every emperor who had neither lived nor died like a tyrant, the senate by a solemn decree should place him in the number of the gods: and the ceremonies of his apotheosis were blended with those of his funeral. This legal, and, as it should seem, injudicious profanation, so abhorrent to our stricter principles, was received with a very faint murmur[31] by the easy nature of Polytheism; but it was received as an institution, not of religion, but of policy. We should disgrace the virtues of the Antonines by comparing them with the vices of Hercules or Jupiter. Even the characters of Cæsar or Augustus were far superior to those of the popular deities. But it was the misfortune of the former to live in an enlightened age, and their actions were too faithfully recorded to admit of such a mixture of fable and mystery as the devotion of the vulgar requires. As soon as their

[29] See a dissertation of the Abbé Mongault in the first volume of the Academy of Inscriptions. [For the whole subject see the admirable article of Mr. Purser on *Apotheosis*, in the new edit. of Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities.]

[30] Jurandasque tuum per nomen ponimus *aras*, says Horace to the emperor himself, and Horace was well acquainted with the court of Augustus.

[31] See Cicero in Philippic, i. 6. Julian in Cæsaribus, Inque Deûm templis jurabit Roma per umbras, is the indignant expression of Lucan; but it is a patriotic rather than a devout indignation.

divinity was established by law, it sunk into oblivion, without contributing either to their own fame or to the dignity of succeeding princes.

Titles of *Augustus* and *Cæsar*

In the consideration of the Imperial government, we have frequently mentioned the artful founder, under his well-known title of Augustus, which was not however conferred upon him till the edifice was almost completed. The obscure name of Octavianus he derived from a mean family in the little town of Aricia. It was stained with the blood of the proscriptions; and he was desirous, had it been possible, to erase all memory of his former life. The illustrious surname of Cæsar he had assumed, as the adopted son of the dictator; but he had too much good sense either to hope to be confounded, or to wish to be compared, with that extraordinary man. It was proposed [27 B.C.] in the senate to dignify their minister with a new appellation; and after a very serious discussion, that of Augustus was chosen, among several others, as being the most expressive of the character of peace and sanctity which he uniformly affected.[32] *Augustus* was therefore a personal, *Cæsar* a family distinction. The former should naturally have expired with the prince on whom it was bestowed; and however the latter was diffused by adoption and female alliance, Nero was the last prince who could allege any hereditary claim to the honours of the Julian line. But, at the time of his death, the practice of a century had inseparably connected those appellations with the Imperial dignity, and they have been preserved by a long succession of emperors,—Romans, Greeks, Franks, and Germans,—from the fall of the republic to the present time. A distinction was, however, soon introduced. The sacred title of Augustus was always reserved for the monarch, whilst the name of Cæsar was more freely communicated to his relations; and, from the reign of Hadrian at least, was appropriated to the second person in the state, who was considered as the presumptive heir of the empire.

Character and policy of Augustus

The tender respect of Augustus for a free constitution which he had destroyed can only be explained by an attentive consideration of the character of that subtle tyrant. A cool head, an unfeeling heart, and a cowardly disposition, prompted him at the age of nineteen to assume the mask of hypocrisy, which he never afterwards laid aside. With the same hand, and pro-

[32] Dion Cassius, l. liii. p. 710 [16] with the curious Annotations of Reimar. [*Augustus*, rendered in Greek by Σεβαστός, cast a certain religious halo over the head of the emperor, cp. Dion *loc. cit.*]

bably with the same temper, he signed the proscription of Cicero and the pardon of Cinna. His virtues, and even his vices, were artificial; and according to the various dictates of his interest, he was at first the enemy, and at last the father, of the Roman world.[33] When he framed the artful system of the Imperial authority, his moderation was inspired by his fears. He wished to deceive the people by an image of civil liberty, and the armies by an image of civil government.

Image of liberty for the people

I. The death of Cæsar was ever before his eyes. He had lavished wealth and honours on his adherents; but the most favoured friends of his uncle were in the number of the conspirators. The fidelity of the legions might defend his authority against open rebellion, but their vigilance could not secure his person from the dagger of a determined republican; and the Romans, who revered the memory of Brutus,[34] would applaud the imitation of his virtue. Cæsar had provoked his fate as much by the ostentation of his power as by his power itself. The consul or the tribune might have reigned in peace. The title of king had armed the Romans against his life. Augustus was sensible that mankind is governed by names; nor was he deceived in his expectation that the senate and people would submit to slavery, provided they were respectfully assured that they still enjoyed their ancient freedom. A feeble senate and enervated people cheerfully acquiesced in the pleasing illusion, as long as it was supported by the virtue, or by even the prudence, of the successors of Augustus. It was a motive of self-preservation, not a principle of liberty, that animated the conspirators against Caligula, Nero, and Domitian. They attacked the person of the tyrant, without aiming their blow at the authority of the emperor.

Attempt of the senate after the death of Caligula

There appears, indeed, *one* memorable occasion, in which the senate, after seventy years of patience, made an ineffectual attempt to reassume its long-forgotten rights. When the throne was vacant by the murder of Caligula, the consuls convoked that assembly in the Capitol, condemned the memory of the Cæsars, gave the watchword *liberty* to the few cohorts who

[33] As Octavianus advanced to the banquet of the Cæsars, his colour changed like that of the chameleon; pale at first, then red, afterwards black, he at last assumed the mild livery of Venus and the Graces (Cæsars, p. 309). This image, employed by Julian in his ingenious fiction, is just and elegant; but, when he considers this change of character as real, and ascribes it to the power of philosophy, he does too much honour to philosophy and to Octavianus.

[34] Two centuries after the establishment of monarchy, the emperor Marcus Antoninus recommends the character of Brutus as a perfect model of Roman virtue.

faintly adhered to their standard, and during eight and forty hours, acted as the independent chiefs of a free commonwealth. But while they deliberated, the prætorian guards had resolved. The stupid Claudius, brother of Germanicus, was already in their camp, invested with the Imperial purple, and prepared to support his election by arms. The dream of liberty was at an end; and the senate awoke to all the horrors of inevitable servitude. Deserted by the people, and threatened by a military force, that feeble assembly was compelled to ratify the choice of the prætorians, and to embrace the benefit of an amnesty, which Claudius had the prudence to offer, and the generosity to observe.[35]

Image of government for the armies

II. The insolence of the armies inspired Augustus with fears of a still more alarming nature. The despair of the citizens could only attempt what the power of the soldiers was, at any time, able to execute. How precarious was his own authority over men whom he had taught to violate every social duty! He had heard their seditious clamours; he dreaded their calmer moments of reflection. One revolution had been purchased by immense rewards; but a second revolution might double those rewards. The troops professed the fondest attachment to the house of Cæsar; but the attachments of the multitude are capricious and inconstant. Augustus summoned to his aid whatever remained in those fierce minds of Roman prejudices; enforced the rigour of discipline by the sanction of law; and, interposing the majesty of the senate between the emperor and the army, boldly claimed their allegiance as the first magistrate of the republic.[36]

Their obedience

During a long period of two hundred and twenty years, from the establishment of this artful system to the death of Commodus, the dangers inherent to a military government were, in a great measure, suspended. The soldiers were seldom roused to that fatal sense of their own strength, and of the weakness of the civil authority, which was, before and afterwards, productive of such dreadful calamities. Caligula and Domitian were assassinated in their palace by their own domestics:[37] the convul-

[35] It is much to be regretted that we have lost the part of Tacitus which treated of that transaction. We are forced to content ourselves with the popular rumours of Josephus, and the imperfect hints of Dion and Suetonius.

[36] Augustus restored the ancient severity of discipline. After the civil wars, he dropped the endearing name of Fellow-Soldiers, and called them only Soldiers (Sueton. in August. c. 25). See the use Tiberius made of the senate in the mutiny of the Pannonian legions (Tacit. Annal. i. [25]).

[37] [Caligula was slain by officers of the prætorian guards.]

sions which agitated Rome on the death of the former were confined to the walls of the city. But Nero involved the whole empire in his ruin. In the space of eighteen months four princes perished by the sword; and the Roman world was shaken by the fury of the contending armies. Excepting only this short, though violent, eruption of military licence, the two centuries from Augustus to Commodus passed away, unstained with civil blood, and undisturbed by revolutions. The emperor was elected by the *authority of the senate* and *the consent of the soldiers*.[38] The legions respected their oath of fidelity; and it requires a minute inspection of the Roman annals to discover three inconsiderable rebellions, which were all suppressed in a few months, and without even the hazard of a battle.[39]

Designation of a successor

In elective monarchies, the vacancy of the throne is a moment big with danger and mischief. The Roman emperors, desirous to spare the legions that interval of suspense, and the temptation of an irregular choice, invested their designed successor with so large a share of present power, as should enable him, after their decease, to assume the remainder without suffering the empire to perceive the change of masters. Thus Augustus, after all his fairer prospects had been snatched from him by untimely deaths, rested his last hopes on Tiberius, obtained for his adopted son the censorial and tribunitian powers, and dictated a law, by which the future prince was invested with an authority equal to his own over the provinces and the armies.[40] Thus Vespasian subdued the generous mind of his eldest son. Titus was adored by the eastern legions, which, under his command, had recently achieved the conquest of Judea. His power was dreaded, and, as his virtues were clouded by the intemperance of youth, his designs were suspected. Instead of listening to such unworthy suspicions, the prudent monarch associated Titus to the full powers of the Imperial dignity; and the grateful son ever approved himself the humble and faithful minister of so indulgent a father.[41]

Of Tiberius

Of Titus

[38] These words seem to have been the constitutional language. See Tacit. Annal. xiii. 4.

[39] The first was Camillus Scribonianus, who took up arms in Dalmatia against Claudius, and was deserted by his own troops in five days; the second, L. Antonius, in Germany, who rebelled against Domitian; and the third, Avidius Cassius, in the reign of M. Antoninus. The two last reigned but a few months and were cut off by their own adherents. We may observe, that both Camillu and Cassius coloured their ambition with the design of restoring the republic a task, said Cassius, peculiarly reserved for his name and family.

[40] Velleius Paterculus, l.ii c. 121. Sueton. in Tiber. c. 20.

[41] Sueton. in Tit. c. 6. Plin. in Præfat. Hist. Natur.

The race of the Cæsars and the Flavian family

The good sense of Vespasian engaged him indeed to embrace every measure that might confirm his recent and precarious elevation. The military oath, and the fidelity of the troops, had been consecrated, by the habits of an hundred years, to the name and family of the Cæsars; and, although that family had been continued only by the fictitious rite of adoption, the Romans still revered, in the person of Nero, the grandson of Germanicus, and the lineal successor of Augustus. It was not without reluctance and remorse that the prætorian guards had been persuaded to abandon the cause of the tyrant.[42] The rapid downfall of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, taught the armies to consider the emperors as the creatures of *their* will, and the instruments of *their* licence. The birth of Vespasian was mean; his grandfather had been a private soldier, his father a petty officer of the revenue,[43] his own merit had raised him, in an advanced age, to the empire; but his merit was rather useful than shining, and his virtues were disgraced by a strict and even sordid parsimony. Such a prince consulted his true interest by the association of a son whose more splendid and amiable character might turn the public attention from the obscure origin to the future glories of the Flavian house. Under the mild administration of Titus, the Roman world enjoyed a transient felicity, and his beloved memory served to protect, above fifteen years, the vices of his brother Domitian.

A.D. 96. Adoption and character of Trajan

Nerva had scarcely accepted the purple from the assassins of Domitian before he discovered that his feeble age was unable to stem the torrent of public disorders which had multiplied under the long tyranny of his predecessor. His mild disposition was respected by the good; but the degenerate Romans required a more vigorous character, whose justice should strike terror into the guilty. Though he had several relations, he fixed his choice on a stranger. He adopted Trajan, then about forty years of age, and who commanded a powerful army in the Lower Germany; and immediately, by a decree of the senate, declared

A.D. 98

him his colleague and successor in the empire.[44] It is sincerely to be lamented, that, whilst we are fatigued with the disgustful relation of Nero's crimes and follies, we are reduced to collect the actions of Trajan from the glimmerings of an abridgment, or

[42] This idea is frequently and strongly inculcated by Tacitus. See Hist. i. 5. 16. ii. 76.

[43] The emperor Vespasian, with his usual good sense, laughed at the Genealogists, who deduced his family from Flavius, the founder of Reate (his native country), and one of the companions of Hercules. Sueton. in Vespasian. i. 12.

[44] Dio. l. lxviii. p. 1121 [3]. Plin. Secund. in Panegyric. [7]

the doubtful light of a panegyric. There remains, however, one panegyric far removed beyond the suspicion of flattery. Above two hundred and fifty years after the death of Trajan, the senate, in pouring out the customary acclamations on the accession of a new emperor, wished that he might surpass the felicity of Augustus, and the virtue of Trajan.[45]

A.D. 117. Of Hadrian

We may readily believe that the father of his country hesitated whether he ought to intrust the various and doubtful character of his kinsman Hadrian with sovereign power. In his last moments, the arts of the empress Plotina either fixed the irresolution of Trajan, or boldly supposed a fictitious adoption,[46] the truth of which could not be safely disputed; and Hadrian was peaceably acknowledged as his lawful successor. Under his reign, as has been already mentioned, the empire flourished in peace and prosperity. He encouraged the arts, reformed the laws, asserted military discipline, and visited all his provinces in person. His vast and active genius was equally suited to the most enlarged views and the minute details of civil policy. But the ruling passions of his soul were curiosity and vanity. As they prevailed, and as they were attracted by different objects, Hadrian was, by turns, an excellent prince, a ridiculous sophist, and a jealous tyrant. The general tenor of his conduct deserved praise for its equity and moderation. Yet, in the first days of his reign, he put to death four consular senators, his personal enemies, and men who had been judged worthy of empire; and the tediousness of a painful illness rendered him, at last, peevish and cruel. The senate doubted whether they should pronounce him a god or a tyrant; and the honours decreed to his memory were granted to the prayers of the pious Antoninus.[47]

Adoption of the elder and younger Verus

The caprice of Hadrian influenced his choice of a successor. After revolving in his mind several men of distinguished merit, whom he esteemed and hated, he adopted Ælius Verus, a gay and voluptuous nobleman, recommended by uncommon beauty to the lover of Antinous.[48] But whilst Hadrian was delighting

[45] Felicior Augusto, MELIOR TRAJANO. Eutrop. viii. 5.

[46] Dion (l. lxix. p. 1249 [1]) affirms the whole to have been a fiction, on the authority of his father, who being governor of the province where Trajan died, had very good opportunities of sifting this mysterious transaction. Yet Dodwell (Prælect. Camden. xvii.) has maintained, that Hadrian was called to the certain hope of the empire during the life-time of Trajan.

[47] Dion, l. lxx. p. 1171 [1]. Aurel. Victor [13].

[48] The deification of Antinous, his medals, statutes, temples, city, oracles, and constellation, are well known, and still dishonour the memory of Hadrian. Yet we may remark, that of the first fifteen emperors Claudius was the only one whose taste in love was entirely correct. For the honours of Antinous, see Spanheim, Commentaires sur les Cæsars de Julien, p. 80.

himself with his own applause, and the acclamations of the soldiers, whose consent had been secured by an immense donative, the new Cæsar [49] was ravished from his embraces by an untimely death. He left only one son. Hadrian commended the boy to the gratitude of the Antonines. He was adopted by Pius; and, on the accession of Marcus, was invested with an equal share of sovereign power. Among the many vices of this younger Verus, he possessed one virtue—a dutiful reverence for his wiser colleague, to whom he willingly abandoned the ruder cares of empire. The philosophic emperor dissembled his follies, lamented his early death, and cast a decent veil over his memory.

Adoption of the two Antonines

As soon as Hadrian's passion was either gratified or disappointed, he resolved to deserve the thanks of posterity by placing the most exalted merit on the Roman throne. His discerning eye easily discovered a senator about fifty years of age, blameless in all the offices of life; and a youth of about seventeen, whose riper years opened the fair prospect of every virtue: the elder of these was declared the son and successor of Hadrian, on condition, however, that he himself should immediately adopt the younger. The two Antonines (for it is of them that we are now speaking) governed the Roman world forty-two years with the same invariable spirit of wisdom and virtue. Although Pius had two sons, [50] he preferred the welfare of Rome to the interest of his family, gave his daughter Faustina in marriage to young Marcus, obtained from the senate the tribunitian and proconsular powers, and, with a noble disdain, or rather ignorance, of jealousy, associated him to all the labours of government. Marcus, on the other hand, revered the character of his benefactor, loved him as a parent, obeyed him as his sovereign, [51] and, after he was no more, regulated his own administration by the example and maxims of his predecessor. Their united reigns are possibly the only period of history in which the happiness of a great people was the sole object of government.

A.D. 138-180

Character and reign of Pius

Titus Antoninus Pius had been justly denominated a second Numa. The same love of religion, justice, and peace, was the distinguishing characteristic of both princes. But the situation of the latter opened a much larger field for the exercise of those

[49] Hist. August. p. 13 [ii. 1]. Aurelius Victor in Epitom. [9].

[50] Without the help of medals and inscriptions, we should be ignorant of this fact, so honourable to the memory of Pius. [But see Hist. Aug. iii. i. 7. We have their names from coins.]

[51] During the twenty-three years of Pius's reign, Marcus was only two nights absent from the palace, and even those were at different times. Hist. August. p. 25. [iv. 7.]

virtues. Numa could only prevent a few neighbouring villages from plundering each other's harvests. Antoninus diffused order and tranquillity over the greatest part of the earth. His reign is marked by the rare advantage of furnishing very few materials for history; which is, indeed, little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind. In private life he was an amiable as well as a good man. The native simplicity of his virtue was a stranger to vanity or affectation. He enjoyed with moderation the conveniences of his fortune, and the innocent pleasures of society;[52] and the benevolence of his soul displayed itself in a cheerful serenity of temper.

Of Marcus

The virtue of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus was of a severer and more laborious kind.[53] It was the well-earned harvest of many a learned conference, of many a patient lecture, and many a midnight lucubration. At the age of twelve years he embraced the rigid system of the Stoics, which taught him to submit his body to his mind, his passions to his reason; to consider virtue as the only good, vice as the only evil, all things external as things indifferent.[54] His Meditations, composed in the tumult of a camp, are still extant; and he even condescended to give lessons on philosophy, in a more public manner than was perhaps consistent with the modesty of a sage or the dignity of an emperor.[55] But his life was the noblest commentary on the precepts of Zeno. He was severe to himself, indulgent to the imperfection of others, just and beneficent to all mankind. He regretted that Avidius Cassius, who excited a rebellion in Syria, had disappointed him, by a voluntary death, of the

[52] He was fond of the theatre and not insensible to the charms of the fair sex. Marcus Antoninus, i. 16. Hist. August. p. 20. 21 [iii. 8 and 11]. Julian in Cæsar.

[53] The enemies of Marcus charged him with hypocrisy and with a want of that simplicity which distinguished Pius and even Verus (Hist. Aug. p. 34 [iii. 29]). This suspicion, unjust as it was, may serve to account for the superior applause bestowed upon personal qualifications, in preference to the social virtues. Even Marcus Antoninus has been called a hypocrite; but the wildest scepticism never insinuated that Cæsar might possibly be a coward, or Tully a fool. Wit and valour are qualifications more easily ascertained than humanity or the love of justice.

[54] Tacitus has characterized, in a few words, the principles of the Portico: Doctores sapientiæ secutus est, qui sola bona quæ honesta, mala tantum quæ turpia; potentiam, nobilitatem, cæteraque extra animum, neque bonis neque malis adnumerant. Tacit. Hist. iv. 5.

[55] Before he went on the second expedition against the Germans, he read lectures of philosophy to the Roman people, during three days. He had already done the same in the cities of Greece and Asia. Hist. August. p. 41, in Cassio, c. 3.

pleasure of converting an enemy into a friend; and he justified the sincerity of that sentiment, by moderating the zeal of the senate against the adherents of the traitor.[56] War he detested, as the disgrace and calamity of human nature; but when the necessity of a just defence called upon him to take up arms, he readily exposed his person to eight winter campaigns on the frozen banks of the Danube, the severity of which was at last fatal to the weakness of his constitution. His memory was revered by a grateful posterity, and above a century after his death many persons preserved the image of Marcus Antoninus among those of their household gods.[57]

Happiness of the Romans

If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman empire was governed by absolute power, under the guidance of virtue and wisdom. The armies were restrained by the firm but gentle hand of four successive emperors, whose characters and authority commanded involuntary respect. The forms of the civil administration were carefully preserved by Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as the accountable ministers of the laws. Such princes deserved the honour of restoring the republic, had the Romans of their days been capable of enjoying a rational freedom.

Its precarious nature

The labours of these monarchs were over-paid by the immense reward that inseparably waited on their success; by the honest pride of virtue, and by the exquisite delight of beholding the general happiness of which they were the authors. A just but melancholy reflection embittered, however, the noblest of human enjoyments. They must often have recollected the instability of a happiness which depended on the character of a single man. The fatal moment was perhaps approaching, when some licentious youth, or some jealous tyrant, would abuse, to the destruction, that absolute power which they had exerted for the benefit of their people. The ideal restraints of the senate and the laws might serve to display the virtues, but could never correct the vices, of the emperor. The military force was a blind and irresistible instrument of oppression; and the corruption of Roman manners would always supply flatterers eager to applaud, and

[56] Dio. l. lxxi. p. 1190 [23], Hist. August. in Avid. Cassio [8].
[57] Hist. August. in Marc. Antonin. c. 18.

ministers prepared to serve, the fear or the avarice, the lust or the cruelty, of their masters.

Memory of Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, and Domitian

These gloomy apprehensions had been already justified by the experience of the Romans. The annals of the emperors exhibit a strong and various picture of human nature, which we should vainly seek among the mixed and doubtful characters of modern history. In the conduct of those monarchs we may trace the utmost lines of vice and virtue; the most exalted perfection and the meanest degeneracy of our own species. The golden age of Trajan and the Antonines had been preceded by an age of iron. It is almost superfluous to enumerate the unworthy successors of Augustus. Their unparalleled vices, and the splendid theatre on which they were acted, have saved them from oblivion. The dark unrelenting Tiberius, the furious Caligula, the stupid Claudius, the profligate and cruel Nero, the beastly Vitellius,[58] and the timid inhuman Domitian, are condemned to everlasting infamy. During fourscore years (excepting only the short and doubtful respite of Vespasian's reign),[59] Rome groaned beneath an unremitting tyranny, which exterminated the ancient families of the republic, and was fatal to almost every virtue and every talent that arose in that unhappy period.

Peculiar misery of the Romans under their tyrants

Under the reign of these monsters[60] the slavery of the Romans was accompanied with two peculiar circumstances, the one occasioned by their former liberty, the other by their extensive conquests, which rendered their condition more wretched than that of the victims of tyranny in any other age or country. From these causes were derived, 1. The exquisite sensibility of the sufferers; and 2. The impossibility of escaping from the hand of the oppressor.

Insensibility of the Orientals

I. When Persia was governed by the descendants of Sefi, a race of princes whose wanton cruelty often stained their divan, their table, and their bed with the blood of their favourites, there is a saying recorded of a young nobleman, That he never

[58] Vitellius consumed in mere eating at least six millions of our money, in about seven months. It is not easy to express his vices with dignity, or even decency. Tacitus fairly calls him a hog; but it is by substituting for a coarse word a very fine image. "At Vitellius, umbraculis hortorum abditus, ut *ignava animalia*, quibus si cibum suggeras jacent torpentque, præterita, instantia, futura, pari oblivione dimiserat. Atque illum nemore Aricino desidem et marcentem," &c. Tacit. Hist. iii. 36, ii. 95. Sueton. in Vitell. c. 13. Dio. Cassius, l. lxv. p. 1062 [3].

[59] The execution of Helvidius Priscus and of the virtuous Eponina disgraced the reign of Vespasian.

[60] [But there is another side to this picture, which may be seen by studying Mommsen's volume on the provinces].

departed from the sultan's presence without satisfying himself whether his head was still on his shoulders. The experience of every day might almost justify the scepticism of Rustan.[61] Yet the fatal sword, suspended above him by a single thread, seems not to have disturbed the slumbers, or interrupted the tranquillity, of the Persian. The monarch's frown, he well knew, could level him with the dust; but the stroke of lightning or apoplexy might be equally fatal; and it was the part of a wise man to forget the inevitable calamities of human life in the enjoyment of the fleeting hour. He was dignified with the appellation of the king's slave; had, perhaps, been purchased from obscure parents, in a country which he had never known; and was trained up from his infancy in the severe discipline of the seraglio.[62] His name, his wealth, his honours, were the gift of a master, who might, without injustice, resume what he had bestowed. Rustan's knowledge, if he possessed any, could only serve to confirm his habits by prejudices. His language afforded not words for any form of government, except absolute monarchy. The history of the East informed him that such had ever been the condition of mankind.[63] The Koran, and the interpreters of that divine book, inculcated to him that the sultan was the descendant of the prophet, and the vicegerent of heaven; that patience was the first virtue of a Mussulman, and unlimited obedience the great duty of a subject.

Knowledge and free spirit of the Romans

The minds of the Romans were very differently prepared for slavery. Oppressed beneath the weight of their own corruption and of military violence, they for a long while preserved the sentiments, or at least the ideas, of their freeborn ancestors. The education of Helvidius and Thrasea, of Tacitus and Pliny, was the same as that of Cato and Cicero. From Grecian philosophy they had imbibed the justest and most liberal notions of the dignity of human nature and the origin of civil society. The history of their own country had taught them to revere a free, a virtuous, and a victorious commonwealth; to abhor the successful crimes of Cæsar and Augustus; and inwardly to despise those tyrants whom they adored with the most abject flattery. As magistrates and senators, they were admitted into the great council which

[61] Voyage de Chardin en Perse, vol. iii. p. 293.

[62] The practice of raising slaves to the great offices of state is still more common among the Turks than among the Persians. The miserable countries of Georgia and Circassia supply rulers to the greatest part of the East.

[63] Chardin says that European travellers have diffused among the Persians some ideas of the freedom and mildness of our governments. They have done them a very ill office.

had once dictated laws to the earth, whose name gave still a sanction to the acts of the monarch, and whose authority was so often prostituted to the vilest purposes of tyranny. Tiberius, and those emperors who adopted his maxims, attempted to disguise their murders by the formalities of justice, and perhaps enjoyed a secret pleasure in rendering the senate their accomplice as well as their victim. By this assembly the last of the Romans were condemned for imaginary crimes and real virtues. Their infamous accusers assumed the language of independent patriots, who arraigned a dangerous citizen before the tribunal of his country; and the public service was rewarded by riches and honours.[64] The servile judges professed to assert the majesty of the commonwealth, violated in the person of its first magistrate,[65] whose clemency they most applauded when they trembled the most at his inexorable and impending cruelty.[66] The tyrant beheld their baseness with just contempt, and encountered their secret sentiments of detestation with sincere and avowed hatred for the whole body of the senate.

Extent of their empire left them no place of refuge

II. The division of Europe into a number of independent states, connected, however, with each other, by the general resemblance of religion, language and manners, is productive of the most beneficial consequences to the liberty of mankind. A modern tyrant, who should find no resistance either in his own breast or in his people, would soon experience a gentle restraint from the example of his equals, the dread of present censure, the advice of his allies, and the apprehension of his enemies. The object of his displeasure, escaping from the narrow limits of his dominions, would easily obtain, in a happier climate, a secure refuge, a new fortune adequate to his merit, the freedom of complaint, and perhaps the means of revenge. But the empire of the Romans filled the world, and, when that empire fell into the hands of a single person, the world became a safe and

[64] They alleged the example of Scipio and Cato (Tacit. Annal. iii. 66.) Marcellus Eprius and Crispius Vibius had acquired two millions and a half under Nero. Their wealth, which aggravated their crimes, protected them under Vespasian. See Tacit. Hist. iv. 43. Dialog. de Orator, c. 8. For one accusation, Regulus, the just object of Pliny's satire, received from the senate the consular ornaments, and a present of sixty thousand pounds.

[65] The crime of *majesty* was formerly a treasonable offence against the Roman people. As tribunes of the people, Augustus and Tiberius applied it to their own persons, and extended it to an infinite latitude.

[66] After the virtuous and unfortunate widow of Germanicus had been put to death, Tiberius received the thanks of the senate for his clemency. She had not been publicly strangled; nor was the body drawn with a hook to the Gemoniæ, where those of common malefactors were exposed. See Tacit. Annal. vi. 25. Sueton. in Tiberio. c. 53.

dreary prison for his enemies. The slave of Imperial despotism, whether he was condemned to drag his gilded chain in Rome and the senate, or to wear out a life of exile on the barren rock of Seriphus, or the frozen banks of the Danube, expected his fate in silent despair.[67] To resist was fatal, and it was impossible to fly. On every side he was encompassed with a vast extent of sea and land, which he could never hope to traverse without being discovered, seized, and restored to his irritated master. Beyond the frontiers, his anxious view could discover nothing, except the ocean, inhospitable deserts, hostile tribes of barbarians, of fierce manners and unknown language, or dependent kings, who would gladly purchase the emperor's protection by the sacrifice of an obnoxious fugitive.[68] "Wherever you are," said Cicero to the exiled Marcellus, "remember that you are equally within the power of the conqueror."[69]

[67] Seriphus was a small rocky island in the Ægean Sea, the inhabitants of which were despised for their ignorance and obscurity. The place of Ovid's exile is well known by his just but unmanly lamentations. It should seem that he only received an order to leave Rome in so many days, and to transport himself to Tomi. Guards and gaolers were unnecessary.

[68] Under Tiberius, a Roman knight attempted to fly to the Parthians. He was stopt in the straits of Sicily; but so little danger did there appear in the example, that the most jealous of tyrants disdained to punish it. Tacit. Annal. vi. 14.

[69] Cicero ad Familiares, iv. 7.

CHAPTER IV

The cruelty, follies, and murder of Commodus—Election of Pertinax—his attempts to reform the State—his assassination by the Pretorian Guards

Indulgence of Marcus

THE mildness of Marcus, which the rigid discipline of the Stoics was unable to eradicate, formed, at the same time, the most amiable, and the only defective, part of his character. His excellent understanding was often deceived by the unsuspecting goodness of his heart. Artful men, who study the passions of princes and conceal their own, approached his person in the disguise of philosophic sanctity, and acquired riches and honours by affecting to despise them.[1] His excessive indulgence to his brother,[2] his wife, and his son, exceeded the bounds of private virtue, and became a public injury, by the example and consequences of their vices.

to his wife Faustina;

Faustina, the daughter of Pius and the wife of Marcus, has been as much celebrated for her gallantries as for her beauty. The grave simplicity of the philosopher was ill calculated to engage her wanton levity, or to fix that unbounded passion for variety which often discovered personal merit in the meanest of mankind.[3] The Cupid of the ancients was, in general, a very sensual deity; and the amours of an empress, as they exact on her side the plainest advances, are seldom susceptible of much sentimental delicacy. Marcus was the only man in the empire who seemed ignorant or insensible of the irregularities of Faustina; which, according to the prejudices of every age, reflected some disgrace on the injured husband. He promoted

[1] See the complaints of Avidius Cassius. Hist. August. p. 45 [vi. 14]. These are, it is true, the complaints of faction; but even faction exaggerates, rather than invents.

[2] [L. Verus, his brother by adoption.]

[3] [Siquidem] Faustinam satis constat [constet] apud Cayetam, *conditiones* sibi et nauticas et gladiatorias elegisse. Hist. August. p. 30 [iv. 19]. Lampridius explains the sort of merit which Faustina chose, and the *conditions* which she exacted. Hist. August. p. 102 [xvii, 5]. [There is no trustworthy evidence for the truth of these charges].

several of her lovers to posts of honour and profit,[4] and, during a connexion of thirty years, invariably gave her proofs of the most tender confidence, and of a respect which ended not with her life. In his Meditations he thanks the gods, who had bestowed on him a wife so faithful, so gentle, and of such a wonderful simplicity of manners.[5] The obsequious senate, at his earnest request, declared her a goddess. She was represented in her temples, with the attributes of Juno, Venus, and Ceres; and it was decreed that, on the day of their nuptials, the youth of either sex should pay their vows before the altar of their chaste patroness.[6]

to his son Commodus

The monstrous vices of the son have cast a shade on the purity of the father's virtues. It has been objected to Marcus, that he sacrificed the happiness of millions to a fond partiality for a worthless boy; and that he chose a successor in his own family rather than in the republic. Nothing, however, was neglected by the anxious father, and by the men of virtue and learning whom he summoned to his assistance, to expand the narrow mind of young Commodus, to correct his growing vices, and to render him worthy of the throne for which he was designed. But the power of instruction is seldom of much efficacy, except in those happy dispositions where it is almost superfluous. The distasteful lesson of a grave philosopher was, in a moment, obliterated by the whisper of a profligate favourite; and Marcus himself blasted the fruits of this laboured education, by admitting his son, at the age of fourteen or fifteen, to a full participation of the Imperial power. He lived but four years afterwards; but he lived long enough to repent a rash measure, which raised the impetuous youth above the restraint of reason and authority.

Accession of the emperor Commodus

Most of the crimes which disturb the internal peace of society are produced by the restraints which the necessary, but unequal, laws of property have imposed on the appetites of mankind, by confining to a few the possession of those objects that are coveted by many. Of all our passions and appetites, the love of power is of the most imperious and unsociable nature, since the pride of one man requires the submission of the multitude. In the

[4] Hist. August. p. 34 [iv. 29].

[5] Meditat. l. i. [17]. The world has laughed at the credulity of Marcus; but Madame Dacier assures us (and we may credit a lady) that the husband will always be deceived, if the wife condescends to dissemble.

[6] Dio. Cassius, l. lxxi. p. 1195 [31]. Hist. August. p. 33. [iv. 26]. Commentaire de Spanheim sur les Cæsars de Julien, p. 289. The deification of Faustina is the only defect which Julian's criticism is able to discover in the all-accomplished character of Marcus.

tumult of civil discord the laws of society lose their force, and their place is seldom supplied by those of humanity. The ardour of contention, the pride of victory, the despair of success, the memory of past injuries, and the fear of future dangers, all contribute to inflame the mind, and to silence the voice of pity. From such motives almost every page of history has been stained with civil blood; but these motives will not account for the unprovoked cruelties of Commodus, who had nothing to wish, and everything to enjoy. The beloved son of Marcus succeeded to his father, amidst the acclamations of the senate and armies;[7] and when he ascended the throne, the happy youth saw round him neither competitor to remove, nor enemies to punish. In this calm elevated station it was surely natural that he should prefer the love of mankind to their detestation, the mild glories of his five predecessors to the ignominious fate of Nero and Domitian. A. D. 180

Character of Commodus

Yet Commodus was not, as he has been represented, a tiger born with an insatiate thirst of human blood, and capable, from his infancy, of the most inhuman actions.[8] Nature had formed him of a weak, rather than a wicked, disposition. His simplicity and timidity rendered him the slave of his attendants, who gradually corrupted his mind. His cruelty, which at first obeyed the dictates of others, degenerated into habit, and at length became the ruling passion of his soul.[9]

He returns to Rome

Upon the death of his father Commodus found himself embarrassed with the command of a great army, and the conduct of a difficult war against the Quadi and Marcomanni.[10] The servile and profligate youths whom Marcus had banished soon regained their station and influence about the new emperor. They exaggerated the hardships and dangers of a campaign in the wild countries beyond the Danube; and they assured the

[7] Commodus was the first *Porphyrogenitus* (born since his father's accession to the throne). By a new strain of flattery, the Egyptian medals date by the years of his life; as if they were synonymous to those of his reign. Tillemont. Hist. des Empereurs, tom. ii. p. 752. [The claim of Commodus to be *nobilissimus omnium principum* (Corp. Insc. Lat. v. 4867) was well grounded. He could point to five emperors as his ancestors. His imperial name was M. Aurelius Commodus Antoninus. He had been made a Cæsar in 166, and Imperator in 176 A.D. at the age of 15.]

[8] Hist. August. p. 46 [vii. 1].

[9] Dion Cassius, l. lxxii. p. 1203 [1].

[10] According to Tertullian (Apolog. c. 25.) he died at Sirmium. But the situation of Vindobona, or Vienna, where both the Victors place his death, is better adapted to the operations of the war against the Marcomanni and Quadi. [Date 17th March, 180 A.D.]

indolent prince that the terror of his name and the arms of his lieutenants would be sufficient to complete the conquest of the dismayed barbarians, or to impose such conditions as were more advantageous than any conquest. By a dexterous application to his sensual appetites, they compared the tranquillity, the splendour, the refined pleasures of Rome with the tumult of a Pannonian camp, which afforded neither leisure nor materials for luxury.[11] Commodus listened to the pleasing advice; but whilst he hesitated between his own inclination and the awe which he still retained for his father's counsellors, the summer insensibly elapsed, and his triumphal entry into the capital was deferred till the autumn. His graceful person,[12] popular address, and imagined virtues attracted the public favour; the honourable peace which he had recently granted to the barbarians diffused an universal joy;[13] his impatience to revisit Rome was fondly ascribed to the love of his country; and his dissolute course of amusements was faintly condemned in a prince of nineteen years of age.

During the three first years of his reign, the forms, and even the spirit, of the old administration were maintained by those faithful counsellors, to whom Marcus had recomended his son, and for whose wisdom and integrity Commodus still entertained a reluctant esteem. The young prince and his profligate favourites reveled in all the license of sovereign power; but his hands were yet unstained with blood; and he had even displayed a generosity of sentiment, which might perhaps have ripened into solid virtue.[14] A fatal incident decided his fluctuating character.

Is wounded by an assassin A.D. 183

One evening, as the emperor was returning to the palace through a dark and narrow portico in the amphitheatre,[15] an

[11] Herodian, l. i. p. 12 [6].

[12] Herodian, l. i. p. 16 [7].

[13] This universal joy is well described (from the medals as well as historians) by Mr. Wotton, Hist. of Rome, p. 192, 193. [The terms of the peace were that the Marcomanni and Quadi should not approach nearer than 150 Roman miles to the Danube, should pay a tribute of corn, and furnish a contingent of recruits, and should not make war on the Vandals, Buri, and Jazyges, who were *Roman subjects*. The treaty was a good one if Commodus had been strong enough to insist on its execution. Its articles were not carried out, yet the peace was not disturbed.]

[14] Manilius, the confidential secretary of Avidius Cassius, was discovered after he had lain concealed for several years. The emperor nobly relieved the public anxiety by refusing to see him, and burning his papers without opening them, Dion Cassius, l. lxxii. p. 1209.

[15] See Maffei degli Amphitheatri, p. 126,

assassin, who waited his passage, rushed upon him with a drawn sword, loudly exclaiming, *The senate sends you this.* The menace prevented the deed; the assassin was seized by the guards, and immediately revealed the authors of the conspiracy. It had been formed, not in the state, but within the walls of the palace. Lucilla, the emperor's sister, and widow of Lucius Verus, impatient of the second rank, and jealous of the reigning empress, had armed the murderer against her brother's life. She had not ventured to communicate the black design to her second husband, Claudius Pompeianus, a senator of distinguished merit and unshaken loyalty; but among the crowd of her lovers (for she imitated the manners of Faustina) she found men of desperate fortunes and wild ambition, who were prepared to serve her more violent as well as her tender passions. The conspirators experienced the rigour of justice, and the abandoned princess was punished, first with exile, and afterwards with death.[16]

Hatred and cruelty of Commodus towards the senate

But the words of the assassin sunk deep into the mind of Commodus, and left an indelible impression of fear and hatred against the whole body of the senate. Those whom he had dreaded as importunate ministers, he now suspected as secret enemies. The Delators, a race of men discouraged, and almost extinguished, under the former reigns, again became formidable as soon as they discovered that the emperor was desirous of finding disaffection and treason in the senate. That assembly, whom Marcus had ever considered as the great council of the nation, was composed of the most distinguished of the Romans; and distinction of every kind soon became criminal. The possession of wealth stimulated the diligence of the informers; rigid virtue implied a tacit censure of the irregularities of Commodus; important services implied a dangerous superiority of merit, and the friendship of the father always insured the aversion of the son. Suspicion was equivalent to proof; trial to condemnation. The execution of a considerable senator was attended with the death of all who might lament or revenge his fate; and when Commodus had once tasted human blood, he became incapable of pity or remorse.

The Quintilian brothers

Of these innocent victims of tyranny, none died more lamented than the two brothers of the Quintilian family, Maximus and Condianus, whose fraternal love has saved their names from oblivion, and endeared their memory to posterity. Their studies and their occupations, their pursuits and their pleasures, were

[16] Dio. l. lxxii. p. 1205 [4] Herodian, l. i. p. 16 [8] Hist. August. p. 46 [vii. 4.] [The would-be assassin was Claudius Pompeianus Quintianus, Lucilla's stepson.]

still the same. In the enjoyment of a great estate, they never admitted the idea of a separate interest: some fragments are now extant of a treatise [17] which they composed in common; and in every action of life it was observed that their two bodies were animated by one soul. The Antonines, who valued their virtues and delighted in their union, raised them, in the same year, to the consulship; and Marcus afterwards intrusted to their joint care the civil administration of Greece, and a great military command, in which they obtained a signal victory over the Germans. The kind cruelty of Commodus united them in death.[18]

The minister Perennis

The tyrant's rage, after having shed the noblest blood of the senate, at length recoiled on the principal instrument of his cruelty. Whilst Commodus was immersed in blood and luxury, he devolved the detail of the public business on Perennis; a servile and ambitious minister, who had obtained his post by the murder of his predecessor, but who possessed a considerable share of vigour and ability. By acts of extortion, and the forfeited estates of the nobles sacrificed to his avarice, he had accumulated an immense treasure. The Praetorian guards were under his immediate command; and his son, who already discovered a military genius, was at the head of the Illyrian legions. Perennis aspired to the empire; or what, in the eyes of Commodus, amounted to the same crime, he was capable of aspiring to it, had he not been prevented, surprised, and put to death. The fall of a minister is a very trifling incident in the general history of the empire; but it was hastened by an extraordinary circumstance, which proved how much the nerves of discipline were already relaxed. The legions of Britain, discontented with the administration of Perennis, formed a deputation of fifteen hundred select men, with instructions to march to Rome, and lay their complaints before the emperor. These military petitioners, by their own determined behaviour, by inflaming the divisions of the guards, by exaggerating the strength of the British army, and by alarming the fears of Commodus, exacted and obtained the minister's death, as the only redress of their grievances.[19] This presumption of a distant army, and

A.D. 186 [185]

[17] [On agriculture.]

[18] In a note upon the Augustan History, Casaubon has collected a number of particulars concerning these celebrated brothers. See p. 94 of his learned commentary.

[19] Dio. l. lxxii. p. 1210 [9]. Herodian, l. i. p. 22 [9]. Hist. August. p. 48 [vii. 6. 1-5]. Dion gives a much less odious character of Perennis, than the

their discovery of the weakness of government, was a sure presage of the most dreadful convulsions.

Revolt of Maternus

The negligence of the public administration was betrayed soon afterwards by a new disorder, which arose from the smallest beginnings. A spirit of desertion began to prevail among the troops, and the deserters, instead of seeking their safety in flight or concealment, infested the highways. Maternus, a private soldier, of a daring boldness above his station, collected these bands of robbers into a little army, set open the prisons, invited the slaves to assert their freedom, and plundered with impunity the rich and defenceless cities of Gaul and Spain. The governors of the provinces, who had long been the spectators, and perhaps the partners, of his depredations, were, at length, roused from their supine indolence by the threatening commands of the emperor. Maternus found that he was encompassed, and foresaw that he must be overpowered. A great effort of despair was his last resource. He ordered his followers to disperse, to pass the Alps in small parties and various disguises, and to assemble at Rome, during the licentious tumult of the festival of Cybele.[20] To murder Commodus, and to ascend the vacant throne, was the ambition of no vulgar robber. His measures were so ably concerted that his concealed troops already filled the streets of Rome. The envy of an accomplice discovered [187 A.D.] and ruined this singular enterprise in the moment when it was ripe for execution.[21]

The minister Cleander

Suspicious princes often promote the last of mankind, from a vain persuasion that those who have no dependence except on their favour will have no attachment except to the person of their benefactor. Cleander, the successor of Perennis, was a Phrygian by birth; of a nation, over whose stubborn but servile temper blows only could prevail.[22] He had been sent from his native country to Rome, in the capacity of a slave. As a slave he entered the imperial palace, rendered himself useful

other historians. His moderation is almost a pledge of his veracity. [The policy of Perennis, which caused his fall, aimed at ousting the senators from military appointments and substituting men of the Equestrian order. The intervention of the Britannic legions rests on Dion. Date 185, cp. Müller, Hermes, 18, p. 623 *sqq.*]

[20] During the second Punic war, the Romans imported from Asia the worship of the mother of the gods. Her festival, the *Megalesia*, began on the fourth of April, and lasted six days. The streets were crowded with mad processions, the theatres with spectators, and the public tables with unbidden guests. Order and police were suspended, and pleasure was the only serious business of the city. See Ovid de Fastis, l. iv. 189, &c.

[21] Herodian, l. i. p. 23, 28 [10].

[22] Cicero pro Flacco, c. 27

to his master's passions, and rapidly ascended to the most exalted station which a subject could enjoy. His influence over the mind of Commodus was much greater than that of his predecessor; for Cleander was devoid of any ability or virtue which could inspire the emperor with envy or distrust. Avarice was the reigning passion of his soul, and the great principle of his administration. The rank of consul, of Patrician, of senator, was exposed to public sale; and it would have been considered as disaffection if any one had refused to purchase these empty and disgraceful honours with the greatest part of his fortune.[23] In the lucrative provincial employments the minister shared with the governor the spoils of the people. The execution of the laws was venal and arbitrary. A wealthy criminal might obtain not only the reversal of the sentence by which he was justly condemned; but might likewise inflict whatever punishment he pleased on the accuser, the witnesses, and the judge.

His avarice and cruelty

By these means Cleander, in the space of three years, had accumulated more wealth than had ever yet been possessed by any freedman.[24] Commodus was perfectly satisfied with the magnificent presents which the artful courtier laid at his feet in the most seasonable moments. To divert the public envy, Cleander, under the emperor's name, erected baths, porticos, and places of exercise, for the use of the people.[25] He flattered himself that the Romans, dazzled and amused by this apparent liberality, would be less affected by the bloody scenes which were daily exhibited; that they would forget the death of Byrrhus, a senator to whose superior merit the late emperor had granted one of his daughters; and that they would forgive the execution of Arrius Antoninus, the last representative of the name and virtues of the Antonines. The former, with more integrity than prudence, had attempted to disclose to his brother-in-law the true character of Cleander. An equitable sentence pronounced by the latter, when proconsul of Asia, against a worthless creature of the favourite, proved fatal to

[23] One of these dear-bought promotions occasioned a current bon mot, that Julius Solon was *banished* into the senate. [In one year there were no less than twenty-five consuls.]

[24] Dion (l. lxxii. p. 1213 [12]) observes that no freedman had possessed riches equal to those of Cleander. The fortune of Pallas amounted, however, to upwards of five and twenty hundred thousand pounds—*ter millies.*

[25] Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1213 [12]. Herodian, l. i. p. 29 [12]. Hist. August. p. 52 [vii. 17]. These baths were situated near the *Porta Capena.* See Nardini Roma Antica, p. 79.

him.[26] After the fall of Perennis the terrors of Commodus had, for a short time, assumed the appearance of a return to virtue. He repealed the most odious of his acts, loaded his memory with the public execration, and ascribed to the pernicious counsels of that wicked minister all the errors of his inexperienced youth. But his repentance lasted only thirty days; and, under Cleander's tyranny, the administration of Perennis was often regretted.

Sedition; and death of Cleander A.D. 189

Pestilence and famine contributed to fill up the measure of the calamities of Rome.[27] The first could only be imputed to the just indignation of the gods; but a monopoly of corn, supported by the riches and power of the minister, was considered as the immediate cause of the second. The popular discontent, after it had long circulated in whispers, broke out in the assembled circus. The people quitted their favourite amusements for the more delicious pleasure of revenge, rushed in crowds towards a palace in the suburbs, one of the emperor's retirements, and demanded, with angry clamours, the head of the public enemy. Cleander, who commanded the Prætorian guards,[28] ordered a body of cavalry to sally forth and disperse the seditious multitude. The multitude fled with precipitation towards the city; several were slain, and many more were trampled to death; but, when the cavalry entered the streets their pursuit was checked by a shower of stones and darts from the roofs and windows of the houses. The foot guards,[29] who had been long jealous of the prerogatives and insolence of the Prætorian cavalry, embraced the party of the people. The tumult became a regular engagement, and threatened a general massacre. The Prætorians at length gave way, oppressed with numbers; and the tide of popular fury returned with redoubled

[26] Hist. August. p. 48.

[27] Herodian, l. i. p. 28 [12]. Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1215 [14]. The latter says, that two thousand persons died every day at Rome, during a considerable length of time. [The pestilence was probably a new outbreak of the same plague which had ravaged the Empire under Marcus.]

[28] Tuncque primum tres præfecti prætorio fuere: inter quos libertinus. From some remains of modesty, Cleander declined the title, whilst he assumed the powers, of Prætorian Præfect. As the other freedmen were styled, from their several departments, *a rationibus, ab epistolis;* Cleander called himself *a pugione*, as intrusted with the defence of his master's person. Salmasius and Casaubon seem to have talked very idly upon this passage.

[29] Οἱ τῆς πόλεως πέζοι στρατιῶται. Herodian, l. i. p. 31 [12]. It is doubtful whether he means the Prætorian infantry, or the cohortes urbanæ, a body of six thousand men, but whose rank and discipline were not equal to their numbers. Neither Tillemont nor Wotton choose to decide this question. [Doubtless the *cohortes urbanæ*.]

violence against the gates of the palace, where Commodus lay dissolved in luxury, and alone unconscious of the civil war. It was death to approach his person with the unwelcome news. He would have perished in this supine security had not two women, his eldest sister Fadilla, and Marcia the most favoured of his concubines, ventured to break into his presence. Bathed in tears, and with dishevelled hair, they threw themselves at his feet, and, with all the pressing eloquence of fear, discovered to the affrighted emperor the crimes of the minister, the rage of the people, and the impending ruin which in a few minutes would burst over his palace and person. Commodus started from his dream of pleasure, and commanded that the head of Cleander should be thrown out to the people. The desired spectacle instantly appeased the tumult; and the son of Marcus might even yet have regained the affection and confidence of his subjects.[30]

Dissolute pleasures of Commodus

But every sentiment of virtue and humanity was extinct in the mind of Commodus. Whilst he thus abandoned the reins of empire to these unworthy favourites, he valued nothing in sovereign power except the unbounded licence of indulging his sensual appetites. His hours were spent in a seraglio of three hundred beautiful women and as many boys, of every rank and of every province; and, wherever the arts of seduction proved ineffectual, the brutal lover had recourse to violence. The ancient historians [31] have expatiated on these abandoned scenes of prostitution, which scorned every restraint of nature or modesty; but it would not be easy to translate their too faithful descriptions into the decency of modern language. The intervals

His ignorance and low sports

of lust were filled up with the basest amusements. The influence of a polite age and the labour of an attentive education had never been able to infuse into his rude and brutish mind the least tincture of learning; and he was the first of the Roman emperors totally devoid of taste for the pleasures of the understanding. Nero himself excelled, or affected to excel, in the elegant arts of music and poetry; nor should we despise his pursuits, had he not converted the pleasing relaxation of a leisure hour into the serious business and ambition of his life. But Commodus, from his earliest infancy, discovered an aversion to whatever was rational or liberal, and a fond attachment to

[30] Dion Cassius, l. lxxii. p. 1215 [13]. Herodian, l. i, p. 32 [13] Hist. August. p. 48 [vii. 7].

[31] Sororibus suis constupratis. Ipsas concubinas suas sub oculis suis stuprari jubebat. Nec irruentium in se juvenum carebat infamiâ, omni parte corporis atque ore in sexum utrumque pollutus. Hist. August. p. 47 [vii. 5].

the amusements of the populace,—the sports of the circus and amphitheatre, the combats of gladiators, and the hunting of wild beasts. The masters in every branch of learning, whom Marcus provided for his son, were heard with inattention and disgust; whilst the Moors and Parthians, who taught him to dart the javelin and to shoot with the bow, found a disciple who delighted in his application, and soon equaled the most skilful of his instructors in the steadiness of the eye and the dexterity of the hand.

Hunting of wild beasts

The servile crowd, whose fortune depended on their master's vices, applauded these ignoble pursuits. The perfidious voice of flattery reminded him that, by exploits of the same nature, by the defeat of the Nemean lion, and the slaughter of the wild boar of Erymanthus, the Grecian Hercules had acquired a place among the gods, and an immortal memory among men. They only forgot to observe that, in the first ages of society, when the fiercer animals often dispute with man the possession of an unsettled country, a successful war against those savages is one of the most innocent and beneficial labours of heroism. In the civilized state of the Roman empire the wild beasts had long since retired from the face of man and the neighbourhood of populous cities. To surprise them in their solitary haunts, and to transport them to Rome, that they might be slain in pomp by the hand of an emperor, was an enterprise equally ridiculous for the prince and oppressive for the people.[32] Ignorant of these distinctions, Commodus eagerly embraced the glorious resemblance, and styled himself (as we still read on his medals)[33] the *Roman Hercules.* The club and the lion's hide were placed by the side of the throne amongst the ensigns of sovereignty; and statues were erected, in which Commodus was represented in the character and with the attributes of the God whose valour and dexterity he endeavoured to emulate in the daily course of his ferocious amusements.[34]

Commodus displays his skill in the amphitheatre

Elated with these praises, which gradually extinguished the innate sense of shame, Commodus resolved to exhibit, before the eyes of the Roman people, those exercises which till then he had

[32] The African lions, when pressed by hunger, infested the open villages and cultivated country; and they infested them with impunity. The royal beast was reserved for the pleasures of the emperor and the capital; and the unfortunate peasant, who killed one of them, though in his own defence, incurred a very heavy penalty. This extraordinary *game law* was mitigated by Honorius, and finally repealed by Justinian. Codex Theodos. tom. v. p. 92, et Comment. Gothofred.

[33] Spanheim de Numismat. Dissertat. xii. tom. ii. 493. [*Herc. Comm.*, and on Alexandrine coins Ῥωμαῖον Ἡρακλέα].

[34] Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1216 [15]. Hist. August. p. 49 [vii. 8].

decently confined within the walls of his palace and to the presence of a few favourites. On the appointed day the various motives of flattery, fear, and curiosity, attracted to the amphitheatre an innumerable multitude of spectators; and some degree of applause was deservedly bestowed on the uncommon skill of the Imperial performer. Whether he aimed at the head or heart of the animal, the wound was alike certain and mortal. With arrows, whose point was shaped into the form of a crescent, Commodus often intercepted the rapid career and cut asunder the long bony neck of the ostrich.[35] A panther was let loose; and the archer waited till he had leaped upon a trembling malefactor. In the same instant the shaft flew, the beast dropt dead, and the man remained unhurt. The dens of the amphitheatre disgorged at once a hundred lions; a hundred darts from the unerring hand of Commodus laid them dead as they ran raging round the *Arena*. Neither the huge bulk of the elephant nor the scaly hide of the rhinoceros could defend them from his stroke. Æthiopia and India yielded their most extraordinary productions; and several animals were slain in the amphitheatre which had been seen only in the representations of art, or perhaps of fancy.[36] In all these exhibitions, the surest precautions were used to protect the person of the Roman Hercules from the desperate spring of any savage who might possibly disregard the dignity of the emperor and the sanctity of the god.[37]

Acts as a gladiator

But the meanest of the populace were affected with shame and indignation, when they beheld their sovereign enter the lists as a gladiator, and glory in a profession which the laws and manners of the Romans had branded with the justest note of infamy.[38] He chose the habit and arms of the *Secutor*, whose combat with the *Retiarius* formed one of the most lively scenes in the bloody sports of the amphitheatre. The *Secutor* was armed

[35] The ostrich's neck is three feet long, and composed of seventeen vertebræ. See Buffon Hist. Naturelle.

[36] Commodus killed a camelopardalis or giraffe (Dion, l. lxxii p. 1211 [10]) the tallest, the most gentle, and the most useless of the large quadrupeds. This singular animal, a native only of the interior parts of Africa, has not been seen in Europe since the revival of letters, and though M. de Buffon (Hist. Naturelle, tom. xiii.) has endeavoured to describe, he has not ventured to delineate, the giraffe.

[37] Herodian, l, i. p. 37 [15]. Hist. August. p. 50 [vii. 11].

[38] The virtuous, and even the wise, princes forbade the senators and knights to embrace this scandalous profession, under pain of infamy, or what was more dreaded by those profligate wretches, of exile. The tyrants allured them to dishonour by threats and rewards. Nero once produced, in the arena, forty senators and sixty knights. See Lipsius, Saturnalia, l. ii. c. 2. He has happily corrected a passage of Suetonius, in Nerone, c. 12.

with an helmet, sword, and buckler; his naked antagonist had only a large net and a trident; with the one he endeavoured to entangle, with the other to dispatch, his enemy. If he missed the first throw he was obliged to fly from the pursuit of the *Secutor* till he had prepared his net for a second cast.[39] The emperor fought in this character seven hundred and thirty-five several times. These glorious achievements were carefully recorded in the public acts of the empire; and, that he might omit no circumstance of infamy, he received from the common fund of gladiators a stipend so exorbitant that it became a new and most ignominious tax upon the Roman people.[40] It may be easily supposed that in these engagements the master of the world was always successful: in the amphitheatre his victories were not often sanguinary; but when he exercised his skill in the school of gladiators, or his own palace, his wretched antagonists were frequently honoured with a mortal wound from the hand of Commodus, and obliged to seal their flattery with their blood.[41] He now disdained the appellation of Hercules. The name of Paulus, a celebrated Secutor, was the only one which delighted his ear. It was inscribed on his colossal statues, and repeated in the redoubled acclamations[42] of the mournful and applauding senate.[43] Claudius Pompeianus, the virtuous husband of Lucilla, was the only senator who asserted the honour of his rank. As a father he permitted his sons to consult their safety by attending the amphitheatre. As a Roman he declared that his own life was in the emperor's hands, but that he would never behold the son of Marcus prostituting his person and dignity. Notwithstanding his manly resolution, Pompeianus escaped the resentment of the tyrant, and, with his honour, had the good fortune to preserve his life.[44]

His infamy and extravagance

Commodus had now attained the summit of vice and infamy.

[39] Lipsius, l. ii. c. 7, 8. Juvenal in the eighth satire gives a picturesque description of this combat.

[40] Hist. August. p. 50 [vii. 11]. Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1220 [19]. He received, for each time, *decies*, about £8000 pounds sterling.

[41] Victor tells us that Commodus only allowed his antagonists a leaden weapon, dreading most probably the consequences of their despair. [*Cæsar.*, 4.]

[42] They were obliged to repeat six hundred and twenty-six times, *Paulus, first of the Secutors*, &c.

[43] Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1221 [20]. He speaks of his own baseness and danger.

[44] He mixed however some prudence with his courage, and passed the greatest part of his time in a country retirement; alleging his advanced age, and the weakness of his eyes. "I never saw him in the senate," says Dion, "except during the short reign of Pertinax." All his infirmities had suddenly left him, and they returned as suddenly upon the murder of that excellent prince. Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1227 [3].

Amidst the acclamations of a flattering court, he was unable to disguise from himself that he had deserved the contempt and hatred of every man of sense and virtue in his empire. His ferocious spirit was irritated by the consciousness of that hatred, by the envy of every kind of merit, by the just apprehension of danger, and by the habit of slaughter which he contracted in his daily amusements. History has preserved a long list of consular senators sacrificed to his wanton suspicion, which sought out, with peculiar anxiety, those unfortunate persons connected, however remotely, with the family of the Antonines, without sparing even the ministers of his crimes or pleasures.[45] His cruelty proved at last fatal to himself. He had shed with impunity the noblest blood of Rome: he perished as soon as he was dreaded by his own domestics. Marcia, his favourite concubine, Eclectus, his chamberlain, and Lætus, his Prætorian præfect, alarmed by the fate of their companions and predecessors, resolved to prevent the destruction which every hour hung over their heads, either from the mad caprice of the tyrant, or the sudden indignation of the people. Marcia seized the occasion of presenting a draught of wine to her lover, after he had fatigued himself with hunting some wild beasts. Commodus retired to sleep; but whilst he was labouring with the effects of poison and drunkenness, a robust youth, by profession a wrestler, entered his chamber, and strangled him without resistance. The body was secretly conveyed out of the palace, before the least suspicion was entertained in the city, or even in the court, of the emperor's death. Such was the fate of the son of Marcus, and so easy was it to destroy a hated tyrant, who, by the artificial powers of government, had oppressed, during thirteen years, so many millions of subjects, every one of whom was equal to their master in personal strength and personal abilities.[46]

Conspiracy of his domestics

Death of Commodus A. D. 192. 31st December

Choice of Pertinax for emperor

The measures of the conspirators were conducted with the deliberate coolness and celerity which the greatness of the occasion required. They resolved instantly to fill the vacant throne with an emperor whose character would justify and

[45] The præfects were changed almost hourly or daily; and the caprice of Commodus was often fatal to his most favoured chamberlains. Hist. August. 46, 51 [vii. 14 and 15].

[46] Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1222 [22]. Herodian, l. i. p. 43. Hist. August. p. 52. [vii. 17]. [The situation on the death of Commodus has been well compared with the situation on the death of Nero. The general joy at deliverance from tyranny, the measures taken by the senate in branding the memory of the fallen tyrant, were alike; and Pertinax, the successor of Commodus, closely resembled Galba, the successor of Nero, in age, respectability, good intentions, and unfitness for the imperial power (Schiller, i. 668).]

maintain the action that had been committed. They fixed on Pertinax, præfect of the city, an ancient senator of consular rank, whose conspicuous merit had broke through the obscurity of his birth, and raised him to the first honours of the state. He had successively governed most of the provinces of the empire; and in all his great employments, military as well as civil, he had uniformly distinguished himself, by the firmness, the prudence, and the integrity of his conduct.[47] He now remained almost alone of the friends and ministers of Marcus; and, when, at a late hour of the night, he was awakened with the news that the chamberlain and the præfect were at his door, he received them with intrepid resignation, and desired they would execute their master's orders. Instead of death, they offered him the throne of the Roman world. During some moments he distrusted their intentions and assurances. Convinced at length of the death of Commodus, he accepted the purple with a sincere reluctance, the natural effect of his knowledge both of the duties and of the dangers of the supreme rank.[48]

He is acknowledged by the prætorian guards

Lætus conducted without delay his new emperor to the camp of the Prætorians, diffusing at the same time through the city a seasonable report that Commodus died suddenly of an apoplexy; and that the virtuous Pertinax had *already* succeeded to the throne. The guards were rather surprised than pleased with the suspicious death of a prince whose indulgence and liberality they alone had experienced; but the emergency of the occasion, the authority of their præfect, the reputation of Pertinax, and the clamours of the people, obliged them to stifle their secret

[47] Pertinax was a native of Alba Pompeia, in Piedmont, and son of a timber merchant. The order of his employments (it is marked by Capitolinus) well deserves to be set down as expressive of the form of government and manners of the age. 1. He was a centurion. 2. Præfect of a cohort in Syria, in the Parthian war, and in Britain. 3. He obtained an *Ala*, or squadron of horse, in Mæsia. 4. He was commissary of provisions on the Æmilian way. 5. He commanded the fleet upon the Rhine. 6. He was procurator of Dacia, with a salary of about 1600*l.* a year. 7. He commanded the Veterans of a legion. 8. He obtained the rank of senator. 9. Of prætor. 10. With the command of the first legion in Rhætia and Noricum. 11. He was consul about the year 175. 12. He attended Marcus into the east. 13. He commanded an army on the Danube. 14. He was consular legate of Mæsia. 15. Of Dacia. 16. Of Syria. 17. Of Britain. 18. He had the care of the public provisions at Rome. 19. He was proconsul of Africa. 20. Præfect of the city. Herodian (l. i. p. 48 [ii. 1]) does justice to his disinterested spirit; but Capitolinus, who collected every popular rumour, charges him with a great fortune acquired by bribery and corruption. [He is a favourite with the historian Dion Cassius. His full name was P. Helvius Pertinax, and he was born in 126 A.D.]

[48] Julian, in the Cæsars, taxes him with being accessary to the death of Commodus.

discontents, to accept the donative promised by the new emperor, to swear allegiance to him, and, with joyful acclamations and laurels in their hands, to conduct him to the senate-house, that the military consent might be ratified by the civil authority.

and by the senate, A.D. 193, 1st January

This important night was now far spent; with the dawn of day, and the commencement of the new year, the senators expected a summons to attend an ignominious ceremony. In spite of all remonstrances, even of those of his creatures who yet preserved any regard for prudence or decency, Commodus had resolved to pass the night in the gladiators' school, and from thence to take possession of the consulship, in the habit and with the attendance of that infamous crew. On a sudden, before the break of day, the senate was called together in the temple of Concord, to meet the guards, and to ratify the election of a new emperor. For a few minutes they sat in silent suspense, doubtful of their unexpected deliverance, and suspicious of the cruel artifices of Commodus: but, when at length they were assured that the tyrant was no more, they resigned themselves to all the transports of joy and indignation. Pertinax, who modestly represented the meanness of his extraction, and pointed out several noble senators more deserving than himself of the empire, was constrained by their dutiful violence to ascend the throne, and received all the titles of Imperial power, confirmed by the most sincere vows of fidelity. The memory of Commodus was branded with eternal infamy. The names of tyrant, of gladiator, of public enemy, resounded in every corner of the house. They decreed in tumultuous[49] votes, that his honours should be reversed, his titles erased from the public monuments, his statues thrown down, his body dragged with a hook into the stripping-room of the gladiators, to satiate the public fury; and they expressed some indignation against those officious servants who had already presumed to screen his remains from the justice of the senate. But Pertinax could not refuse those last rites to the memory of Marcus and the tears of his first protector Claudius Pompeianus, who lamented the cruel fate of his brother-in-law, and lamented still more that he had deserved it.[50]

The memory of Commodus declared in famous

[49] [By this epithet Gibbon alludes to the rhythmical acclamations which were the usage in the proceedings of the senate. In the *adclamationes graves* recorded here by Lampridius, the words *hostis* and *parricide* recur as a sort of refrain.]

[50] Capitolinus gives us the particulars of these tumultuary votes, which were moved by one senator, and repeated, or rather chaunted, by the whole body. Hist. August. p. 52. [vii. 18].

Legal jurisdiction of the senate over the emperors

These effusions of impotent rage against a dead emperor, whom the senate had flattered when alive with the most abject servility, betrayed a just but ungenerous spirit of revenge. The legality of these decrees was, however, supported by the principles of the Imperial constitution. To censure, to depose, or to punish with death, the first magistrate of the republic who had abused his delegated trust, was the ancient and undoubted prerogative of the Roman senate;[51] but that feeble assembly was obliged to content itself with inflicting on a fallen tyrant that public justice from which, during his life and reign, he had been shielded by the strong arm of military despotism.

Virtues of Pertinax

Pertinax found a nobler way of condemning his predecessor's memory,—by the contrast of his own virtues with the vices of Commodus. On the day of his accession he resigned over to his wife and son his whole private fortune;[52] that they might have no pretence to solicit favours at the expense of the state. He refused to flatter the vanity of the former with the title of Augusta, or to corrupt the inexperienced youth of the latter by the rank of Cæsar. Accurately distinguishing between the duties of a parent and those of a sovereign, he educated his son with a severe simplicity, which, while it gave him no assured prospect of the throne, might in time have rendered him worthy of it. In public the behaviour of Pertinax was grave and affable. He lived with the virtuous part of the senate[53] (and, in a private station, he had been acquainted with the true character of each individual), without either pride or jealousy; considered them as friends and companions, with whom he had shared the dangers of the tyranny, and with whom he wished to enjoy the security of the present time. He very frequently invited them to familiar entertainments, the frugality of which was ridiculed by those who remembered and regretted the luxurious prodigality of Commodus.[54]

[51] The senate condemned Nero to be put to death *more majorum*. Sueton. c. 49.

[52] [This act has considerable significance in the history of the exchequer of the Roman Empire. Antoninus Pius had already acted in the same way, making over his private property to his daughter Faustina. The principle involved was the separation of the Emperor's private purse from the *fiscus*, or public money which came to him as Emperor. This separation was systematically carried out by Septimius Severus.]

[53] [The note of the policy of Pertinax was the restoration of the authority of the senate, which, during the preceding century, had been gradually becoming less and less. He assumed the title *princeps senatus*, and things looked like a return of the system of Augustus.]

[54] Dion (l. lxxiii. p. 122 [3]) speaks of these entertainments, as a senator who had supped with the emperor; Capitolinus (Hist. August. p. 58 [viii. 12]) like a slave who had received his intelligence from one of the scullions.

He endeavours to reform the state

To heal, as far as it was possible, the wounds inflicted by the hand of tyranny, was the pleasing, but melancholy, task of Pertinax. The innocent victims who yet survived were recalled from exile, released from prison, and restored to the full possession of their honours and fortunes. The unburied bodies of murdered senators (for the cruelty of Commodus endeavoured to extend itself beyond death) were deposited in the sepulchres of their ancestors; their memory was justified; and every consolation was bestowed on their ruined and afflicted families. Among these consolations, one of the most grateful was the punishment of the Delators, the common enemies of their master, of virtue, and of their country. Yet, even in the inquisition of these legal assassins, Pertinax proceeded with a steady temper, which gave everything to justice, and nothing to popular prejudice and resentment.

His regulations

The finances of the state demanded the most vigilant care of the emperor. Though every measure of injustice and extortion had been adopted which could collect the property of the subject into the coffers of the prince, the rapaciousness of Commodus had been so very inadequate to his extravagance that, upon his death, no more than eight thousand pounds were found in the exhausted treasury,[55] to defray the current expenses of government, and to discharge the pressing demand of a liberal donative, which the new emperor had been obliged to promise to the Prætorian guards. Yet, under these distressed circumstances, Pertinax had the generous firmness to remit all the oppressive taxes invented by Commodus, and to cancel all the unjust claims of the treasury; declaring, in a decree of the senate, "that he was better satisfied to administer a poor republic with innocence, than to acquire riches by the ways of tyranny and dishonour". Economy and industry he considered as the pure and genuine sources of wealth; and from them he soon derived a copious supply for the public necessities. The expense of the household was immediately reduced to one half. All the instruments of luxury Pertinax exposed to public auction,[56] gold and silver plate, chariots of a singular construction, a superfluous wardrobe of silk and embroidery, and a great number of beautiful slaves

[55] *Decies*. The blameless economy of Pius, left his successors a treasure of *vicies septies millies*, above two and twenty millions sterling. Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1231 [8].

[56] Besides the design of converting these useless ornaments into money, Dion (l. lxxiii. p. 1229 [5]) assigns two secret motives of Pertinax. He wished to expose the vices of Commodus, and to discover by the purchasers those who most resembled him.

of both sexes; excepting only, with attentive humanity, those who were born in a state of freedom, and had been ravished from the arms of their weeping parents. At the same time that he obliged the worthless favourites of the tyrant to resign a part of their ill-gotten wealth, he satisfied the just creditors of the state, and unexpectedly discharged the long arrears of honest services. He removed the oppressive restrictions which had been laid upon commerce, and granted all the uncultivated lands in Italy and the provinces to those who would improve them; with an exemption from tribute during the term of ten years.[57]

and popularity

Such an uniform conduct had already secured to Pertinax the noblest reward of a sovereign, the love and esteem of his people. Those who remembered the virtues of Marcus were happy to contemplate in their new emperor the features of that bright original, and flattered themselves that they should long enjoy the benign influence of his administration. A hasty zeal to reform the corrupted state, accompanied with less prudence than might have been expected from the years and experience of Pertinax, proved fatal to himself and to his country. His honest indiscretion united against him the servile crowd, who found their private benefit in the public disorders, and who preferred the favour of a tyrant to the inexorable equality of the laws.[58]

Discontent of the Prætorians

Amidst the general joy the sullen and angry countenance of the Prætorian guards betrayed their inward dissatisfaction. They had reluctantly submitted to Pertinax; they dreaded the strictness of the ancient discipline, which he was preparing to restore; and they regretted the licence of the former reign. Their discontents were secretly fomented by Lætus, their præfect, who found, when it was too late, that his new emperor would reward a servant, but would not be ruled by a favourite. On the third day of his reign, the soldiers seized on a noble senator, with a design to carry him to the camp, and to invest him with the imperial purple. Instead of being dazzled by the dangerous honour, the affrighted victim escaped from their violence, and took refuge at the feet of Pertinax. A short time afterwards Sosius Falco, one of the consuls of the year, a rash youth,[59] but

A conspiracy prevented

[57] Though Capitolinus has picked up many idle tales of the private life of Pertinax, he joins with Dion and Herodian in admiring his public conduct [viii. 13].

[58] Leges, rem surdam, inexorabilem esse. T. Liv. ii. 3.

[59] If we credit Capitolinus (which is rather difficult) Falco behaved with the most petulant indecency to Pertinax on the day of his accession. The wise emperor only admonished him of his youth and inexperience. Hist. August. p. 55 [viii. 5].

of an ancient and opulent family, listened to the voice of ambition; and a conspiracy was formed during a short absence of Pertinax, which was crushed by his sudden return to Rome and his resolute behaviour. Falco was on the point of being justly condemned to death as a public enemy, had he not been saved by the earnest and sincere entreaties of the injured emperor; who conjured the senate that the purity of his reign might not be stained by the blood even of a guilty senator.

Murder of Pertinax by the Prætorians, A.D. 193, March 28

These disappointments served only to irritate the rage of the Prætorian guards. On the twenty-eight of March, eighty-six days only after the death of Commodus, a general sedition broke out in the camp, which the officers wanted either power or inclination to suppress. Two or three hundred of the most desperate soldiers marched at noon-day, with arms in their hands and fury in their looks, towards the Imperial palace. The gates were thrown open by their companions upon guard; and by the domestics of the old court, who had already formed a secret conspiracy against the life of the too virtuous emperor. On the news of their approach, Pertinax, disdaining either flight or concealment, advanced to meet his assassins; and recalled to their minds his own innocence, and the sanctity of their recent oath. For a few moments they stood in silent suspense, ashamed of their atrocious design, and awed by the venerable aspect and majestic firmness of their sovereign, till at length, the despair of pardon reviving their fury, a barbarian of the country of Tongres[60] levelled the first blow against Pertinax, who was instantly dispatched with a multitude of wounds. His head, separated from his body, and placed on a lance, was carried in triumph to the Prætorian camp, in the sight of a mournful and indignant people, who lamented the unworthy fate of that excellent prince, and the transient blessings of a reign, the memory of which could serve only to aggravate their approaching misfortunes.[61]

[60] The modern bishopric of Liege. This soldier probably belonged to the Batavian horse-guards, who were mostly raised in the Duchy of Gueldres and the neighbourhood, and were distinguished by their valour, and by the boldness with which they swam their horses across the broadest and most rapid rivers. Tacit. Hist. iv. 12. Dion, l. lv. p. 797 [24]. Lipsius de magnitudine Romanâ, l. i. c. 4.

[61] Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1232 [10]. Herodian, l. ii. p. 60. [5]. Hist. August. p. 58 [viii. 11]. Victor in Epitom., and in Cæsarib. Eutropius, viii. 16.

CHAPTER V

Public sale of the empire to Didius Julianus by the Prætorian Guards—Clodius Albinus in Britain, Pescennius Niger in Syria, and Septimius Severus in Pannonia, declare against the murderers of Pertinax—Civil wars, and victory of Severus over his three rivals—Relaxation of discipline—New maxims of government

Proportion of the military force, to the number of the people

THE power of the sword is more sensibly felt in an extensive monarchy than in a small community. It has been calculated by the ablest politicians that no state, without being soon exhausted, can maintain above the hundredth part of its members in arms and idleness. But, although this relative proportion may be uniform, its influence over the rest of the society will vary according to the degree of its positive strength. The advantages of military science and discipline cannot be exerted, unless a proper number of soldiers are united into one body, and actuated by one soul. With a handful of men, such an union would be ineffectual; with an unwieldy host, it would be impracticable; and the powers of the machine would be alike destroyed by the extreme minuteness, or the excessive weight, of its springs. To illustrate this observation we need only reflect that there is no superiority of natural strength, artificial weapons, or acquired skill, which could enable one man to keep in constant subjection one hundred of his fellow-creatures: the tyrant of a single town, or a small district, would soon discover that an hundred armed followers were a weak defence against ten thousand peasants or citizens; but an hundred thousand well-disciplined soldiers will command, with despotic sway, ten millions of subjects; and a body of ten or fifteen thousand guards will strike terror into the most numerous populace that ever crowded the streets of an immense capital.

The Prætorian guards

Their institution

The Prætorian bands, whose licentious fury was the first symptom and cause of the decline of the Roman empire, scarcely amounted to the last mentioned number.[1] They de-

[1] They were originally nine or ten thousand men (for Tacitus and Dion are not agreed upon the subject), divided into as many cohorts. Vitellius increased them

rived their institution from Augustus. That crafty tyrant, sensible that laws might colour, but that arms alone could maintain, his usurped dominion, had gradually formed this powerful body of guards, in constant readiness to protect his person, to awe the senate, and either to prevent or to crush the first motions of rebellion. He distinguished these favoured troops by a double pay, and superior privileges; but, as their formidable aspect would at once have alarmed and irritated the Roman people, three cohorts only were stationed in the capital; whilst the remainder was dispersed in the adjacent towns of Italy.[2] But after fifty years of peace and servitude, Tiberius ventured on a decisive measure, which for ever riveted the fetters of his country. Under the fair pretences of relieving Italy from the heavy burden of military quarters, and of introducing a stricter discipline among the guards, he assembled them at Rome, in a permanent camp,[3] which was fortified with skilful care,[4] and placed on a commanding situation.[5]

Their camp

Their strength and confidence

Such formidable servants are always necessary, but often fatal, to the throne of despotism. By thus introducing the Prætorian guards, as it were, into the palace and the senate, the emperors taught them to perceive their own strength, and the weakness of the civil government; to view the vices of their masters with familiar contempt, and to lay aside that reverential awe which distance only, and mystery, can preserve towards an imaginary power. In the luxurious idleness of an opulent city, their pride was nourished by the sense of their irresistible weight; nor was it possible to conceal from them that the person of the sovereign, the authority of the senate, the public

to sixteen thousand, and, as far as we can learn from inscriptions, they never afterwards sunk much below that number. See Lipsius de magnitudine Romanâ, i. 4. [The last statement must be modified. The Prætorian guard was a reorganisation of the bodyguard of the generals of the republic. Augustus fixed the Prætorium in Rome, and determined, as the number of the guard, nine cohorts, each cohort consisting of a thousand men. A tenth cohort was subsequently added, but the exact date of this addition is not clear. Vitellius, as Gibbon says (Tacitus, Hist. ii. 93), increased the number to sixteen; but Vespasian restored the original nine (Aurelius Victor, Cæs. 40, 24, cp. Zosimus ii. 17). There is some evidence in inscriptions suggesting that there were twelve cohorts between the reign of Gaius and that of Vitellius. For number of præfects, see Appendix II.]

[2] Sueton. in August. c. 49.

[3] Tacit. Annal. iv. 2. Suet. in Tiber. c. 37. Dion Cassius, l. lvii. p. 867 [19].

[4] In the civil war between Vitellius and Vespasian, the Prætorian camp was attacked and defended with all the machines used in the siege of the best fortified cities. Tacit. Hist. iii. 84.

[5] Close to the walls of the city, on the broad summit of the Quirinal and Viminal hills. See Nardini, Roma Antica, p. 174. Donatus de Româ Antiquâ, p. 46 [Not on the hills, but to the east of them.]

treasure, and the seat of empire, were all in their hands. To divert the Prætorian bands from these dangerous reflections the firmest and best established princes were obliged to mix blandishments with commands, rewards with punishments, to flatter their pride, indulge their pleasures, connive at their irregularities, and to purchase their precarious faith by a liberal donative; which, since the elevation of Claudius, was exacted as a legal claim on the accession of every new emperor.[6]

Their specious claims

The advocates of the guards endeavoured to justify by arguments the power which they asserted by arms; and to maintain that, according to the purest principles of the constitution, *their* consent was essentially necessary in the appointment of an emperor. The election of consuls, of generals, and of magistrates, however it had been recently usurped by the senate, was the ancient and undoubted right of the Roman people.[7] But where was the Roman people to be found? Not surely amongst the mixed multitude of slaves and strangers that filled the streets of Rome; a servile populace, as devoid of spirit as destitute of property. The defenders of the state, selected from the flower of Italian youth,[8] and trained in the exercise of arms and virtue, were the genuine representatives of the people, and the best entitled to elect the military chief of the republic. These assertions, however defective in reason, became unanswerable, when the fierce Prætorians increased their weight, by throwing, like the barbarian conqueror of Rome, their swords into the scale.[9]

They offer the empire to sale

The Prætorians had violated the sanctity of the throne, by the atrocious murder of Pertinax; they dishonoured the majesty of it, by their subsequent conduct. The camp was without a leader, for even the præfect Lætus, who had excited the tempest, prudently declined the public indignation. Amidst the wild disorder, Sulpicianus, the emperor's father-in-law, and governor

[6] Claudius, raised by the soldiers to the empire, was the first who gave a donative. He gave *quina dena*, 120*l.* (Sueton in Claud. c. 10): when Marcus, with his colleague Lucius Verus, took quiet possession of the throne, he gave *vicena*, 160*l.* to each of the guards. Hist. August. p. 25 [iv. 7]. (Dion, lxxiii. p. 1231 [8].) We may form some idea of the amount of these sums, by Hadrian's complaint, that the promotion of a Cæsar had cost him *ter millies*, two millions and a half sterling.

[7] Cicero de Legibus, iii. 3. The first book of Livy, and the second of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, show the authority of the people, even in the election of the kings.

[8] They were originally recruited in Latium, Etruria, and the old colonies (Tacit. Annal. iv. 5). The emperor Otho compliments their vanity, with the flattering titles of Italiæ Alumni, Romana vere juventus. Tacit. Hist. i. 84.

[9] In the siege of Rome by the Gauls. See Livy, v. 48. Plutarch. in Camill. p. 143 [29].

of the city, who had been sent to the camp on the first alarm of mutiny, was endeavouring to calm the fury of the multitude, when he was silenced by the clamorous return of the murderers, bearing on a lance the head of Pertinax. Though history has accustomed us to observe every principle and every passion yielding to the imperious dictates of ambition, it is scarcely credible that, in these moments of horror, Sulpicianus should have aspired to ascend a throne polluted with the recent blood of so near a relation, and so excellent a prince. He had already begun to use the only effectual argument, and to treat for the Imperial dignity; but the more prudent of the Prætorians, apprehensive that, in this private contract, they should not obtain a just price for so valuable a commodity, ran out upon the ramparts; and, with a loud voice, proclaimed that the Roman world was to be disposed of to the best bidder by public auction.[10]

It is purchased by Julian, A.D. 193, March 28

This infamous offer, the most insolent excess of military licence, diffused an universal grief, shame, and indignation throughout the city. It reached at length the ears of Didius Julianus, a wealthy senator, who, regardless of the public calamities, was indulging himself in the luxury of the table.[11] His wife and his daughter, his freedmen and his parasites, easily convinced him that he deserved the throne, and earnestly conjured him to embrace so fortunate an opportunity. The vain old man hastened to the Prætorian camp, where Sulpicianus was still in treaty with the guards; and began to bid against him from the foot of the rampart. The unworthy negotiation was transacted by faithful emissaries, who passed alternately from one candidate to the other, and acquainted each of them with the offers of his rival. Sulpicianus had already promised a donative of five thousand drachms (above one hundred and sixty pounds) to each soldier; when Julian, eager for the prize, rose at once to the sum of six thousand two hundred and fifty drachms, or upwards of two hundred pounds sterling. The gates of the camp were instantly thrown open to the purchaser; he was declared emperor, and received an oath of allegiance from the soldiers, who retained humanity enough to stipulate that he should pardon and forget the competition of Sulpicianus.

Julian is acknowledged by the senate

It was now incumbent on the Prætorians to fulfil the conditions of the sale. They placed their new sovereign, whom they

[10] Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1234 [11]. Herodian, l. ii. p. 63 [6]. Hist. August. p. 60 [ix. 2]. Though the three historians agree that it was in fact an auction, Herodian alone affirms that it was proclaimed as such by the soldiers.

[11] Spartianus softens the most odious parts of the character and elevation of Julian.

served and despised, in the centre of their ranks, surrounded him on every side with their shields, and conducted him in close order of battle through the deserted streets of the city. The senate was commanded to assemble, and those who had been the distinguished friends of Pertinax, or the personal enemies of Julian, found it necessary to affect a more than common share of satisfaction at this happy revolution.[12] After Julian had filled the senate house with armed soldiers, he expatiated on the freedom of his election, his own eminent virtues, and his full assurance of the affections of the senate. The obsequious assembly congratulated their own and the public felicity; engaged their allegiance, and conferred on him all the several branches of the Imperial power.[13] From the senate Julian was conducted by the same military procession, to take possession of the palace. The first objects which struck his eyes were the abandoned trunk of Pertinax, and the frugal entertainment prepared for his supper. The one he viewed with indifference; the other with contempt. A magnificent feast was prepared by his order, and he amused himself till a very late hour, with dice, and the performances of Pylades, a celebrated dancer. Yet it was observed that, after the crowd of flatterers dispersed, and left him to darkness, solitude, and terrible reflection, he passed a sleepless night; revolving most probably in his mind his own rash folly, the fate of his virtuous predecessor, and the doubtful and dangerous tenure of an empire, which had not been acquired by merit, but purchased by money.[14]

Takes possession of the palace

He had reason to tremble. On the throne of the world he found himself without a friend, and even without an adherent. The guards themselves were ashamed of the prince whom their avarice had persuaded them to accept; nor was there a citizen who did not consider his elevation with horror, as the last insult on the Roman name. The nobility, whose conspicuous station and ample possessions exacted the strictest caution, dissembled their sentiments, and met the affected civility of the

The public discontent

[12] Dion Cassius, at that time prætor, had been a personal enemy to Julian, l. lxxiii. p. 1235 [12].

[13] Hist. August. p. 61 [ix. 3, 3]. We learn from thence one curious circumstance, that the new emperor, whatever had been his birth, was immediately aggregated to the number of Patrician families. [His imperial name was M. Didius Severus Julianus. His wife, Mallia Scanilla, and his daughter, Didia Clara, received the title of Augusta (Hist. Aug. ix. 3). Pertinax had declined that honour for his consort.]

[14] Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1235 [13]. Hist. August. p. 61 [ix. 3, 10]. I have endeavoured to blend into one consistent story, the seeming contradictions of the two writers.

emperor with smiles of complacency and professions of duty. But the people, secure in their numbers and obscurity, gave a free vent to their passions. The streets and public places of Rome resounded with clamours and imprecations. The enraged multitude affronted the person of Julian, rejected his liberality, and, conscious of the impotence of their own resentment, they called aloud on the legions of the frontiers to assert the violated majesty of the Roman empire.

The armies of Britain, Syria, and Pannonia declare against Julian

The public discontent was soon diffused from the centre to the frontiers of the empire. The armies of Britain, of Syria, and of Illyricum, lamented the death of Pertinax, in whose company, or under whose command, they had so often fought and conquered. They received with surprise, with indignation, and perhaps with envy, the extraordinary intelligence that the Prætorians had disposed of the empire by public auction; and they sternly refused to ratify the ignominious bargain. Their immediate and unanimous revolt was fatal to Julian, but it was fatal at the same time to the public peace; as the generals of the respective armies, Clodius Albinus, Pescennius Niger, and Septimius Severus, were still more anxious to succeed than to revenge the murdered Pertinax. Their forces were exactly balanced. Each of them was at the head of three legions,[15] with a numerous train of auxiliaries; and, however different in their characters, they were all soldiers of experience and capacity.

Clodius Albinus in Britain

Clodius Albinus,[16] governor of Britain, surpassed both his competitors in the nobility of his extraction, which he derived from some of the most illustrious names of the old republic.[17] But the branch, from whence he claimed his descent, was sunk into mean circumstances, and transplanted into a remote province. It is difficult to form a just idea of his true character. Under the philosophic cloak of austerity, he stands accused of concealing most of the vices which degrade human nature.[18] But his accusers are those venal writers who adored the fortune of Severus, and trampled on the ashes of an unsuccessful rival. Virtue, or the appearances of virtue, recommended Albinus to the confidence and good opinion of Marcus; and his preserving

[15] Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1235 [14].

[16] [D. Clodius Septimus Albinus.]

[17] The Postumian and the Cejonian; the former of whom was raised to the consulship in the fifth year after its institution.

[18] Spartianus in his undigested collections, mixes up all the virtues and all the vices that enter into the human composition, and bestows them on the same object. Such, indeed, are many of the characters in the Augustan history.

with the son the same interest which he had acquired with the father is a proof at least that he was possessed of a very flexible disposition. The favour of a tyrant does not always suppose a want of merit in the object of it; he may, without intending it, reward a man of worth and ability, or he may find such a man useful to his own service. It does not appear that Albinus served the son of Marcus, either as the minister of his cruelties, or even as the associate of his pleasures. He was employed in a distant honourable command, when he received a confidential letter from the emperor, acquainting him of the treasonable designs of some discontented generals, and authorizing him to declare himself the guardian and successor of the throne, by assuming the title and ensigns of Cæsar.[19] The governor of Britain wisely declined the dangerous honour, which would have marked him for the jealousy, or involved him in the approaching ruin, of Commodus. He courted power by nobler, or, at least, by more specious, arts. On a premature report of the death of the emperor, he assembled his troops; and, in an eloquent discourse, deplored the inevitable mischiefs of despotism, described the happiness and glory which their ancestors had enjoyed under the consular government, and declared his firm resolution to reinstate the senate and people in their legal authority. This popular harangue was answered by the loud acclamations of the British legions, and received at Rome with a secret murmur of applause. Safe in the possession of his little world, and in the command of an army less distinguished indeed for discipline than for numbers and valour,[20] Albinus braved the menaces of Commodus, maintained towards Pertinax a stately ambiguous reserve, and instantly declared against the usurpation of Julian. The convulsions of the capital added new weight to his sentiments, or rather to his professions, of patriotism. A regard to decency induced him to decline the lofty titles of Augustus and Emperor, and he imitated perhaps the example of Galba, who, on a similar occasion, had styled himself the Lieutenant of the senate and people.[21]

Personal merit alone had raised Pescennius Niger[22] from an obscure birth and station to the government of Syria; a lucra- Pescennius Niger in Syria

[19] Hist. August. p. 80, 84 [xii. 2, and 6, 4, 5].

[20] Pertinax, who governed Britain a few years before, had been left for dead in a mutiny of the soldiers. Hist. August. p. 54 [viii. 3]. Yet they loved and regretted him; admirantibus eam virtutem cui irascebantur.

[21] Sueton. in Galb. c. 10. [Legatum se senatus ac pop. R. professus est.]

[22] [C. Pescennius Niger Justus.]

tive and important command, which in times of civil confusion gave him a near prospect of the throne. Yet his parts seem to have been better suited to the second than to the first rank ; he was an unequal rival, though he might have approved himself an excellent lieutenant, to Severus, who afterwards displayed the greatness of his mind by adopting several useful institutions from a vanquished enemy.[23] In his government, Niger acquired the esteem of the soldiers and the love of the provincials. His rigid discipline fortified the valour and confirmed the obedience of the former, whilst the voluptuous Syrians were less delighted with the mild firmness of his administration than with the affability of his manners and the apparent pleasure with which he attended their frequent and pompous festivals.[24] As soon as the intelligence of the atrocious murder of Pertinax had reached Antioch, the wishes of Asia invited Niger to assume the Imperial purple and revenge his death. The legions of the eastern frontier embraced his cause ; the opulent but unarmed provinces, from the frontiers of Æthiopia[25] to the Hadriatic, cheerfully submitted to his power ; and the kings beyond the Tigris and the Euphrates congratulated his election, and offered him their homage and services. The mind of Niger was not capable of receiving this sudden tide of fortune ; he flattered himself that his accession would be undisturbed by competition, and unstained by civil blood ; and whilst he enjoyed the vain pomp of triumph, he neglected to secure the means of victory. Instead of entering into an effectual negotiation with the powerful armies of the West, whose resolution might decide, or at least must balance, the mighty contest ; instead of advancing without delay towards Rome and Italy, where his presence was impatiently expected,[26] Niger trifled away in the luxury of Antioch those irretrievable moments which were diligently improved by the decisive activity of Severus.[27]

[23] Hist. August. p. 76 [xi. 7].

[24] Herod. l. ii. p. 68 [7]. The Chronicle of John Malala, of Antioch, shows the zealous attachment of his countrymen to these festivals, which at once gratified their superstition, and their love of pleasure.

[25] A king of Thebes, in Egypt, is mentioned in the Augustan History, as an ally, and, indeed, as a personal friend of Niger. If Spartianus is not, as I strongly suspect, mistaken, he has brought to light a dynasty of tributary princes totally unknown to history.

[26] Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1238 [15]. Herod, l. ii. p. 67 [7]. A verse in every one's mouth at that time, seems to express the general opinion of the three rivals; Optimus est *Niger*, bonus *Afer*, pessimus *Albus*. Hist. August. p. 75 [xi. 8]. [The verse was originally in Greek, but the Latin of Spartianus was innocent of the false quantity which Gibbon ascribes to it. It ran *optimus est Fuscus*, &c.]

[27] Herodian, l. ii. p. 71 [8].

Pannonia and Dalmatia

The country of Pannonia and Dalmatia, which occupied the space between the Danube and the Hadriatic, was one of the last and most difficult conquests of the Romans. In the defence of national freedom, two hundred thousand of these barbarians had once appeared in the field, alarmed the declining age of Augustus, and exercised the vigilant prudence of Tiberius at the head of the collected force of the empire.[28] The Pannonians yielded at length to the arms and institutions of Rome. Their recent subjection, however, the neighbourhood, and even the mixture of the unconquered tribes, and perhaps the climate, adapted, as it has been observed, to the production of great bodies and slow minds,[29] all contributed to preserve some remains of their original ferocity, and, under the tame resemblance of Roman provincials, the hardy features of the natives were still to be discerned. Their warlike youth afforded an inexhaustible supply of recruits to the legions stationed on the banks of the Danube, and which, from a perpetual warfare against the Germans and Sarmatians, were deservedly esteemed the best troops in the service.

Septimius Severus

The Pannonian army was at this time commanded by Septimius Severus, a native of Africa, who, in the gradual ascent of private honours, had concealed his daring ambition, which was never diverted from its steady course by the allurements of pleasure, the apprehension of danger, or the feelings of humanity.[30] On the first news of the murder of Pertinax, he assembled his troops, painted in the most lively colours the crime, the insolence, and the weakness of the Prætorian guards, and animated the legions to arms and to revenge. He concluded (and the peroration was thought extremely eloquent) with promising every soldier about four hundred pounds; an honourable donative, double in value to the infamous bribe with which Julian had purchased the empire.[31] The acclamations of the army immediately saluted Severus with the names of Augustus, Pertinax, and Emperor; and he thus attained the lofty station to which

declared emperor by the Pannonian legions, A.D. 193, April 13

[28] See an account of that memorable war in Velleius Paterculus, ii. 119, &c., who served in the army of Tiberius.

[29] Such is the reflection of Herodian, l. ii. p. 74 [9]. Will the modern Austrians allow the influence?

[30] In the letter to Albinus, already mentioned, Commodus accuses Severus as one of the ambitious generals who censured his conduct, and wished to occupy his place. Hist. August. p. 80 [xii. 2].

[31] Pannonia was too poor to supply such a sum. It was probably promised in the camp, and paid at Rome, after the victory. In fixing the sum, I have adopted the conjecture of Casaubon. See Hist. August. p. 65 [x. 5]. Comment. p. 115.

he was invited by conscious merit and a long train of dreams and omens, the fruitful offspring either of his superstition or policy.[32]

The new candidate for empire saw and improved the peculiar advantage of his situation. His province extended to the Julian Alps, which gave an easy access into Italy; and he remembered the saying of Augustus, That a Pannonian army might in ten days appear in sight of Rome.[33] By a celerity proportioned to the greatness of the occasion, he might reasonably hope to revenge Pertinax, punish Julian, and receive the homage of the senate and people, as their lawful emperor, before his competitors, separated from Italy by an immense tract of sea and land, were apprized of his success, or even of his election. During the whole expedition, he scarcely allowed himself any moments for sleep or food; marching on foot, and in complete armour, at the head of his columns, he insinuated himself into the confidence and affection of his troops, pressed their diligence, revived their spirits, animated their hopes, and was well satisfied to share the hardships of the meanest soldier, whilst he kept in view the infinite superiority of his reward.

Marches into Italy

The wretched Julian had expected, and thought himself prepared, to dispute the empire with the governor of Syria; but in the invincible and rapid approach of the Pannonian legions, he saw his inevitable ruin.[34] The hasty arrival of every messenger increased his just apprehensions. He was successively informed that Severus had passed the Alps; that the Italian cities, unwilling or unable to oppose his progress, had received him with the warmest professions of joy and duty; that the important place of Ravenna had surrendered without resistance, and that the Hadriatic fleet was in the hands of the conqueror. The enemy was now within two hundred and fifty

Advances towards Rome

[32] Herodian, l. ii. p. 78 [11]. Severus was declared emperor on the banks of the Danube, either at Carnuntum, according to Spartianus (Hist. August. p. 65 [x. 5]) or else at Sabaria, according to Victor [Cæs. xx. 1]. Mr. Hume, in supposing that the birth and dignity of Severus were too much inferior to the Imperial crown, and that he marched into Italy as general only, has not considered this transaction with his usual accuracy. (Essay on the original contract.) [The date in Hist. Aug. is *idibus Augustis*, but Baronius (followed by Pagi, Gibbon, Clinton and De Ceuleneer) amended *idibus April.*, 13th April.]

[33] Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 111. We must reckon the march from the nearest verge of Pannonia, and extend the sight of the city, as far as two hundred miles.

[34] [Schiller remarks that the events which attended the elevation of Vespasian repeat themselves in that of Severus. His march recalls the march of Antonius Primus with the Pannonian legions. Julianus neglected to occupy the Alpine passes.]

miles of Rome; and every moment diminished the narrow span of life and empire allotted to Julian.

He attempted, however, to prevent, or at least to protract, his ruin. He implored the venal faith of the Prætorians, filled the city with unavailing preparations for war, drew lines round the suburbs, and even strengthened the fortifications of the palace; as if those last intrenchments could be defended, without hope of relief, against a victorious invader. Fear and shame prevented the guards from deserting his standard; but they trembled at the name of the Pannonian legions, commanded by an experienced general, and accustomed to vanquish the barbarians on the frozen Danube.[35] They quitted, with a sigh, the pleasures of the baths and theatres, to put on arms, whose use they had almost forgotten, and beneath the weight of which they were oppressed. The unpractised elephants, whose uncouth appearance, it was hoped, would strike terror into the army of the north, threw their unskilful riders; and the awkward evolutions of the marines, drawn from the fleet of Misenum, were an object of ridicule to the populace; whilst the senate enjoyed, with secret pleasure, the distress and weakness of the usurper.[36]

Distress of Julian

Every motion of Julian betrayed his trembling perplexity. He insisted that Severus should be declared a public enemy by the senate. He entreated that the Pannonian general might be associated to the empire. He sent public ambassadors of consular rank to negotiate with his rival; he dispatched private assassins to take away his life. He designed that the Vestal virgins, and all the colleges of priests, in their sacerdotal habits, and bearing before them the sacred pledges of the Roman religion, should advance, in solemn procession, to meet the Pannonian legions; and, at the same time, he vainly tried to interrogate, or to appease, the fates, by magic ceremonies, and unlawful sacrifices.[37]

His uncertain conduct

Severus, who dreaded neither his arms nor his enchantments, guarded himself from the only danger of secret conspiracy by the faithful attendance of six hundred chosen men, who never quitted his person or their cuirasses, either by night or by day, during the whole march. Advancing with a steady and rapid

Is deserted by the Prætorians

[35] This is not a puerile figure of rhetoric, but an allusion to a real fact recorded by Dion, l. lxxi. p. 1181 [7]. It probably happened more than once.

[36] Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1238 [16]. Herodian, l. ii. p. 81 [11]. There is no surer proof of the military skill of the Romans, than their first surmounting the idle terror, and afterwards disdaining the dangerous use, of elephants in war.

[37] Hist. August. p. 62, 63 [ix. 5, 6].

course, he passed, without difficulty, the defiles of the Apennine, received into his party the troops and ambassadors sent to retard his progress, and made a short halt at Interamna, about seventy miles from Rome. His victory was already secure; but the despair of the Prætorians might have rendered it bloody; and Severus had the laudable ambition of ascending the throne without drawing the sword.[38] His emissaries, dispersed in the capital, assured the guards that, provided they would abandon their worthless prince, and the perpetrators of the murder of Pertinax, to the justice of the conqueror, he would no longer consider that melancholy event as the act of the whole body. The faithless Prætorians, whose resistance was supported only by sullen obstinacy, gladly complied with the easy conditions, seized the greatest part of the assassins, and signified to the senate that they no longer defended the cause of Julian. That assembly, convoked by the consul, unanimously acknowledged Severus as lawful emperor, decreed divine honours to Pertinax, and pronounced a sentence of deposition and death against his unfortunate successor. Julian was conducted into a private apartment of the baths of the palace, and beheaded as a common criminal, after having purchased, with an immense treasure, an anxious and precarious reign of only sixty-six days.[39] The almost incredible expedition of Severus, who, in so short a space of time, conducted a numerous army from the banks of the Danube to those of the Tiber, proves at once the plenty of provisions produced by agriculture and commerce, the goodness of the roads, the discipline of the legions, and the indolent subdued temper of the provinces.[40]

and condemned and executed by order of the senate, A.D 193, June 2

Disgrace of the Prætorian guards

The first cares of Severus were bestowed on two measures, the one dictated by policy, the other by decency; the revenge, and the honours due to the memory of Pertinax. Before the new emperor entered Rome, he issued his commands to the Præ-

[38] Victor [Cæs. 19] and Eutropius, viii. 17, mention a combat near the Milvian Bridge, the Ponte Molle, unknown to the better and more ancient writers.

[39] Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1240 [17]. Herodian, l. ii. p. 83 [12]. Hist. August. p. 63 [ix. 9].

[40] From these sixty-six days, we must first deduct sixteen, as Pertinax was murdered on the 28th of March, and Severus most probably elected on the 13th of April. (See Hist. August. p. 65, and Tillemont Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 393, Note 7.) We cannot allow less than ten days after his election, to put a numerous army in motion. Forty days remain for this rapid march, and, as we may compute about eight hundred miles from Rome to the neighbourhood of Vienna, the army of Severus marched twenty miles every day, without halt or intermission.

torian guards, directing them to wait his arrival on a large plain near the city, without arms, but in the habits of ceremony in which they were accustomed to attend their sovereign. He was obeyed by those haughty troops, whose contrition was the effect of their just terrors. A chosen part of the Illyrian army encompassed them with leveled spears. Incapable of flight or resistance, they expected their fate in silent consternation. Severus mounted the tribunal, sternly reproached them with perfidy and cowardice, dismissed them with ignominy from the trust which they had betrayed, despoiled them of their splendid ornaments, and banished them, on pain of death, to the distance of an hundred miles from the capital. During the transaction, another detachment had been sent to seize their arms, occupy their camp, and prevent the hasty consequences of their despair.[41]

The funeral and consecration of Pertinax was next solemnized with every circumstance of sad magnificence.[42] The senate, with a melancholy pleasure, performed the last rites to that excellent prince, whom they had loved and still regretted. The concern of his successor was probably less sincere. He esteemed the virtues of Pertinax, but those virtues would for ever have confined his ambition to a private station. Severus pronounced his funeral oration with studied eloquence, inward satisfaction, and well-acted sorrow; and by this pious regard to his memory, convinced the credulous multitude that *he alone* was worthy to supply his place. Sensible, however, that arms, not ceremonies, must assert his claim to the empire, he left Rome at the end of thirty days, and, without suffering himself to be elated by this easy victory, prepared to encounter his more formidable rivals.

Funeral and apotheosis of Pertinax

The uncommon abilities and fortune of Severus have induced an elegant historian to compare him with the first and greatest of the Cæsars.[43] The parallel is, at least, imperfect. Where shall we find, in the character of Severus, the commanding superiority of soul, the generous clemency, and the various genius, which could reconcile and unite the love of pleasure, the thirst of knowledge, and the fire of ambition?[44] In one

Success of Severus against Niger and against Albinus

[41] Dion, l. lxxiv. p. 1241 [1]. Herodian, l. ii. p. 84 [13].

[42] Dion, l. lxxiv. p. 1244 [4], who assisted at the ceremony as a senator, gives a most pompous description of it.

[43] Herodian, l. iii. p. 112 [7, 7].

[44] Though it is not, most assuredly, the intention of Lucan to exalt the character of Cæsar, yet the idea he gives of that hero, in the tenth book of the Pharsalia, where he describes him, at the same time, making love to Cleopatra, sustaining a siege against the power of Egypt, and conversing with the sages of the country, is, in reality, the noblest panegyric.

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instance only, they may be compared, with some degree of propriety, in the celerity of their motion, and their civil victories. In less than four years,[45] Severus subdued the riches of the east, and the valour of the west. He vanquished two competitors of reputation and ability, and defeated numerous armies, provided with weapons and discipline equal to his own. In that age, the art of fortification and the principles of tactics, were well understood by all the Roman generals; and the constant superiority of Severus was that of an artist, who uses the same instruments with more skill and industry than his rivals. I shall not, however, enter into a minute narrative of these military operations; but as the two civil wars against Niger and against Albinus, were almost the same in their conduct, event, and consequences, I shall collect into one point of view the most striking circumstances, tending to develop the character of the conqueror, and the state of the empire.

Conduct of the two civil wars. Arts of Severus

Falsehood and insincerity, unsuitable as they seem to the dignity of public transactions, offend us with a less degrading idea of meanness than when they are found in the intercourse of private life. In the latter, they discover a want of courage; in the other, only a defect of power; and, as it is impossible for the most able statesmen to subdue millions of followers and enemies by their own personal strength, the world, under the name of policy, seems to have granted them a very liberal indulgence of craft and dissimulation. Yet the arts of Severus cannot be justified by the most ample privileges of state-reason. He promised only to betray, he flattered only to ruin; and however he might occasionally bind himself by oaths and treaties, his conscience, obsequious to his interest, always released him from the inconvenient obligation.[46]

toward Niger

If his two competitors, reconciled by their common danger, had advanced upon him without delay, perhaps Severus would have sunk under their united effort. Had they even attacked him at the same time, with separate views and separate armies, the contest might have been long and doubtful. But they fell, singly and successively, an easy prey to the arts as well as arms of their subtle enemy, lulled into security by the moderation of his professions, and overwhelmed by the rapidity of his action. He first marched against Niger, whose reputation and power he the most dreaded: but he declined any hostile declarations,

[45] Reckoning from his election, April 13, 193, to the death of Albinus, February 19, 197. See Tillemont's Chronology.

[46] Herodian, l. ii. p. 85 [13].

suppressed the name of his antagonist, and only signified to the senate and people his intention of regulating the eastern provinces. In private he spoke of Niger, his old friend and intended successor,[47] with the most affectionate regard, and highly applauded his generous design of revenging the murder of Pertinax. To punish the vile usurper of the throne was the duty of every Roman general. To persevere in arms, and to resist a lawful emperor, acknowledged by the senate, would alone render him criminal.[48] The sons of Niger had fallen into his hands among the children of the provincial governors, detained at Rome as pledges for the loyalty of their parents.[49] As long as the power of Niger inspired terror, or even respect, they were educated with the most tender care, with the children of Severus himself; but they were soon involved in their father's ruin, and removed, first by exile, and afterwards by death, from the eye of public compassion.[50]

towards Albinus

Whilst Severus was engaged in his eastern war, he had reason to apprehend that the governor of Britain might pass the sea and the Alps, occupy the vacant seat of empire, and oppose his return with the authority of the senate and the forces of the West. The ambiguous conduct of Albinus, in not assuming the Imperial title, left room for negotiation. Forgetting at once his professions of patriotism and the jealousy of sovereign power, he accepted the precarious rank of Cæsar, as a reward for his fatal neutrality. Till the first contest was decided, Severus treated the man whom he had doomed to destruction with every mark of esteem and regard. Even in the letter in which he announced his victory over Niger he styles Albinus the brother of his soul and empire, sends him the affectionate salutations of his wife Julia, and his young family, and entreats him to preserve the armies and the republic faithful to their common interest. The messengers charged with this letter were instructed to accost the Cæsar with respect, to desire a private audience, and to plunge their daggers into his heart.[51] The

[47] Whilst Severus was very dangerously ill, it was industriously given out that he intended to appoint Niger and Albinus his successors. As he could not be sincere with respect to both, he might not be so with regard to either. Yet Severus carried his hypocrisy so far as to profess that intention in the memoirs of his own life.

[48] Hist. August. p. 65 [x. 8, 7; and cp. 6].

[49] This practice, invented by Commodus, proved very useful to Severus. He found, at Rome, the children of many of the principal adherents of his rivals; and he employed them more than once to intimidate, or seduce, the parents.

[50] Herodian, l. iii. p. 96. Hist. August. p. 67, 68 [x. 8, 9].

[51] Hist. August. p. 81 [xii. 7]. Spartianus has inserted this curious letter at full length

conspiracy was discovered, and the too credulous Albinus at length passed over to the continent, and prepared for an unequal contest with his rival, who rushed upon him at the head of a veteran and victorious army.

Events of the civil wars

The military labours of Severus seem inadequate to the importance of his conquests. Two engagements, the one near the Hellespont, the other in the narrow defiles of Cilicia, de-

[194 A.D.]

cided the fate of his Syrian competitor; and the troops of Europe asserted their usual ascendant over the effeminate natives of Asia.[52] The battle of Lyons, where one hundred and fifty thousand Romans[53] were engaged, was equally fatal to Albinus. The

[197 A.D.]

valour of the British army maintained, indeed, a sharp and doubtful contest with the hardy discipline of the Illyrian legions. The fame and person of Severus appeared, during a few moments, irrecoverably lost, till that warlike prince rallied his fainting troops, and led them on to a decisive victory.[54] The war was finished by that memorable day.

decided by one or two battles

The civil wars of modern Europe have been distinguished, not only by the fierce animosity, but likewise by the obstinate perseverance, of the contending factions. They have generally been justified by some principle, or, at least, coloured by some pretext, of religion, freedom, or loyalty. The leaders were nobles of independent property and hereditary influence. The troops fought like men interested in the decision of the quarrel; and as military spirit and party zeal were strongly diffused throughout the whole community, a vanquished chief was immediately supplied with new adherents, eager to shed their blood in the same cause. But the Romans, after the fall of the republic, combated only for the choice of masters. Under the standard of a popular candidate for empire, a few enlisted from affection, some from fear, many from interest, none from principle. The legions, uninflamed by party zeal, were allured into civil war by liberal donatives, and still more liberal promises. A defeat, by disabling the chief from the performance of his engagements, dissolved the mercenary allegiance of his followers, and left them to consult their own safety by a timely desertion of an unsuccessful cause. It was of little moment to the provinces under whose name they were oppressed or governed;

[52] Consult the third book of Herodian, and the seventy-fourth book of Dion Cassius.

[53] Dion, l. lxxv. p. 1260 [6].

[54] Dion, l. lxxv. p. 1261 [6]. Herodian, l. iii. p. 110 [7]. Hist. August. p. 68 [x. 11]. The battle was fought in the plain of Trevoux, three or four leagues from Lyons. See Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 406, note 18.

they were driven by the impulsion of the present power, and as soon as that power yielded to a superior force, they hastened to implore the clemency of the conqueror, who, as he had an immense debt to discharge, was obliged to sacrifice the most guilty countries to the avarice of his soldiers. In the vast extent of the Roman empire there were few fortified cities capable of protecting a routed army; nor was there any person, or family, or order of men, whose natural interest, unsupported by the powers of government, was capable of restoring the cause of a sinking party.[55]

Siege of Byzantium

Yet, in the contest between Niger and Severus, a single city deserves an honourable exception. As Byzantium was one of the greatest passages from Europe into Asia, it had been provided with a strong garrison, and a fleet of five hundred vessels was anchored in the harbour.[56] The impetuosity of Severus disappointed this prudent scheme of defence; he left to his generals the siege of Byzantium, forced the less guarded passage of the Hellespont, and, impatient of a meaner enemy, pressed forward to encounter his rival. Byzantium, attacked by a numerous and increasing army, and afterwards by the whole naval power of the empire, sustained a siege of three years, and remained faithful to the name and memory of Niger. The citizens and soldiers (we know not from what cause) were animated with equal fury; several of the principal officers of Niger, who despaired of, or who disdained a pardon, had thrown themselves into this last refuge; the fortifications were esteemed impregnable, and, in the defence of the place, a celebrated engineer displayed all the mechanic powers known to the ancients.[57] Byzantium, at length, surrendered to famine. The A.D. 196] magistrates and soldiers were put to the sword, the walls demolished, the privileges suppressed, and the destined capital of the East subsisted only as an open village, subject to the insulting jurisdiction of Perinthus. The historian Dion, who had admired the flourishing, and lamented the desolate, state of Byzantium, accused the revenge of Severus for depriving the

[55] Montesquieu, Considérations sur la Grandeur et la Décadence des Romains, c. xii.

[56] Most of these, as may be supposed, were small open vessels; some, however, were galleys of two, and a few of three, ranks of oars.

[57] The engineer's name was Priscus. His skill saved his life, and he was taken into the service of the conqueror. For the particular facts of the siege consult Dion Cassius (l. lxx[i]v. p. 1251 [11-13]) and Herodian (l. iii. p. 95 [6]): for the theory of it, the fanciful Chevalier de Folard may be looked into. See Polybe, tom. i. p. 76.

Roman people of the strongest bulwark against the barbarians of Pontus and Asia.[58] The truth of this observation was but too well justified in the succeeding age, when the Gothic fleets covered the Euxine, and passed through the undefended Bosphorus into the centre of the Mediterranean.

Death of Niger and Albinus. Cruel consequences of the civil wars

Both Niger and Albinus were discovered and put to death in their flight from the field of battle. Their fate excited neither surprise nor compassion. They had staked their lives against the chance of empire, and suffered what they would have inflicted; nor did Severus claim the arrogant superiority of suffering his rivals to live in a private station. But his unforgiving temper, stimulated by avarice, indulged a spirit of revenge, where there was no room for apprehension. The most considerable of the provincials, who, without any dislike to the fortunate candidate, had obeyed the governor under whose authority they were accidentally placed, were punished by death, exile, and especially by the confiscation of their estates. Many cities of the East were stript of their ancient honours, and obliged to pay, into the treasury of Severus, four times the amount of the sums contributed by them for the service of Niger.[59]

Animosity of Severus against the senate

Till the final decision of the war, the cruelty of Severus was, in some measure, restrained by the uncertainty of the event and his pretended reverence for the senate. The head of Albinus, accompanied with a menacing letter, announced to the Romans that he was resolved to spare none of the adherents of his unfortunate competitors. He was irritated by the just suspicion that he had never possessed the affections of the senate, and he concealed his old malevolence under the recent discovery of some treasonable correspondencies. Thirty-five senators, however, accused of having favoured the party of Albinus, he freely pardoned; and, by his subsequent behaviour, endeavoured to convince them that he had forgotten, as well as forgiven, their supposed offences. But, at the same time, he condemned forty-one[60] other senators, whose names history has recorded;

[58] Notwithstanding the authority of Spartianus and some modern Greeks, we may be assured, from Dion and Herodian, that Byzantium, many years after the death of Severus, lay in ruins. [But the statement of Spartianus (xiii. 1), that Severus repented of his harshness, owing (ostensibly?) to the intercession of Caracalla, is confirmed by the legend Ἀντωνείνια Σεβαστά, on Byzantine coins; Eckhel, ii. 32 (cp. Schiller, i. 713). Not Byzantium, but its fortifications, were demolished.]

[59] Dion, l. lxxiv. p. 1250 [8].

[60] Dion (l. lxxv. p. 1262 [8]), only twenty-nine senators are mentioned by him, but forty-one are named in the Augustan History, p. 69 [x. 13], among whom were six of the name of Pescennius. Herodian (l. iii. p. 115 [8]) speaks in general of the cruelties of Severus. [It is safer here to follow Dion.]

their wives, children, and clients, attended them in death, and the noblest provincials of Spain and Gaul were involved in the same ruin. Such rigid justice, for so he termed it, was, in the opinion of Severus, the only conduct capable of ensuring peace to the people, or stability to the prince; and he condescended slightly to lament that, to be mild, it was necessary that he should first be cruel.[61]

The wisdom and justice of his government

The true interest of an absolute monarch generally coincides with that of his people. Their numbers, their wealth, their order, and their security, are the best and only foundations of his real greatness; and, were he totally devoid of virtue, prudence might supply its place, and would dictate the same rule of conduct. Severus considered the Roman empire as his property, and had no sooner secured the possession, than he bestowed his care on the cultivation and improvement of so valuable an acquisition. Salutary laws, executed with inflexible firmness, soon corrected most of the abuses with which, since the death of Marcus, every part of the government had been infected. In the administration of justice, the judgments of the emperor were characterized by attention, discernment, and impartiality; and, whenever he deviated from the strict line of equity, it was generally in favour of the poor and oppressed; not so much indeed from any sense of humanity, as from the natural propensity of a despot to humble the pride of greatness, and to sink all his subjects to the same common level of absolute dependence. His expensive taste for building, magnificent shows, and, above all, a constant and liberal distribution of corn and provisions, were the surest means of captivating the affection of the Roman people.[62] The misfortunes of civil discord were obliterated. The calm of peace and prosperity was once more experienced in the provinces, and many cities, restored by the munificence of Severus, assumed the title of his colonies, and attested by public monuments their gratitude and felicity.[63] The fame of the Roman arms was revived by that

General peace and prosperity

[61] Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 20, 13].

[62] Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1272 [1]. Hist. August. p. 67 [x. 8]. Severus celebrated the secular games with extraordinary magnificence, and he left in the public granaries a provision of corn for seven years, at the rate of 75,000 modii, or about 2500 quarters per day. I am persuaded that the granaries of Severus were supplied for a long term, but I am not less persuaded that policy on one hand, and admiration on the other, magnified the hoard far beyond its true contents.

[63] See Spanheim's treatise of ancient medals, the inscriptions, and our learned travellers Spon and Wheeler, Shaw, Pocock, &c., who, in Africa, Greece, and Asia, have found more monuments of Severus, than of any other Roman emperor whatsoever.

warlike and successful emperor,[64] and he boasted, with a just pride, that, having received the empire oppressed with foreign and domestic wars, he left it established in profound, universal and honourable peace.[65]

Relaxation of military discipline

Although the wounds of civil war appeared completely healed, its mortal poison still lurked in the vitals of the constitution. Severus possessed a considerable share of vigour and ability; but the daring soul of the first Cæsar, or the deep policy of Augustus, were scarcely equal to the task of curbing the insolence of the victorious legions. By gratitude, by misguided policy, by seeming necessity, Severus was induced to relax the nerves of discipline.[66] The vanity of his soldiers was flattered with the honour of wearing gold rings; their ease was indulged in the permission of living with their wives in the idleness of quarters. He increased their pay beyond the example of former times, and taught them to expect, and soon to claim, extraordinary donatives on every public occasion of danger or festivity. Elated by success, enervated by luxury, and raised above the level of subjects by their dangerous privileges,[67] they soon became incapable of military fatigue, oppressive to the country, and impatient of a just subordination. Their officers asserted the superiority of rank by a more profuse and elegant luxury. There is still extant a letter of Severus, lamenting the licentious state of the army, and exhorting one of his generals to begin the necessary reformation from the tribunes themselves; since, as he justly observes, the officer who has forfeited the esteem, will never command the obedience, of his soldiers.[68] Had the emperor pursued the train of reflection, he would have discovered that the primary cause of this general corruption might be ascribed, not indeed to the example, but to the pernicious indulgence, however, of the commander-in-chief.

New establishment of the Prætorian guards

The Prætorians, who murdered their emperor and sold the

[64] He carried his victorious arms to Seleucia and Ctesiphon, the capitals of the Parthian monarchy. I shall have occasion to mention this war in its proper place.

[65] *Etiam in Britannis*, was his own just and emphatic expression. Hist. Aug us173 [x. 23].

[66] Herodian, l. iii. p. 115 [8]. Hist. August. p. 68 [x. 12]. [The popularity of Severus and his son Caracalla with the soldiers is illustrated by the vast number of inscriptions in their honour. It is true that discipline was in some respects relaxed; but in other respects the efficacy of the army was improved.]

[67] Upon the insolence and privileges of the soldiers, the 16th satire, falsely ascribed to Juvenal, may be consulted; the style and circumstances of it would induce me to believe that it was composed under the reign of Severus or that of his son.

[68] Hist. August. p. 75 [xi. 3].

empire, had received the just punishment of their treason; but the necessary, though dangerous, institution of guards was soon restored on a new model by Severus, and increased to four times the ancient number.[69] Formerly these troops had been recruited in Italy; and, as the adjacent provinces gradually imbibed the softer manners of Rome, the levies were extended to Macedonia, Noricum and Spain. In the room of these elegant troops, better adapted to the pomp of courts than to the uses of war, it was established by Severus, that, from all the legions of the frontiers, the soldiers most distinguished for strength, valour, and fidelity, should be occasionally draughted, and promoted, as an honour and reward, into the more eligible service of the guards.[70] By this new institution, the Italian youth were diverted from the exercise of arms, and the capital was terrified by the strange aspect and manners of a multitude of barbarians. But Severus flattered himself that the legions would consider these chosen Prætorians as the representatives of the whole military order; and that the present aid of fifty thousand men, superior in arms and appointments to any force that could be brought into the field against them, would for ever crush the hopes of rebellion, and secure the empire to himself and his posterity.

The office of Prætorian præfect

The command of these favoured and formidable troops soon became the first office of the empire. As the government degenerated into military despotism, the Prætorian præfect, who in his origin had been a simple captain of the guards, was placed, not only at the head of the army, but of the finances, and even of the law. In every department of administration, he represented the person, and exercised the authority, of the emperor. The first præfect who enjoyed and abused this immense power was Plautianus, the favourite minister of Severus. His reign lasted above ten years, till the marriage of his daughter with the eldest son of the emperor, which seemed to assure his fortune, proved the occasion of his ruin.[71] The animosities of the palace, by irritating the ambition and alarm-

[69] Herodian, l. iii. p. 131 [13].

[70] Dion, l. lxxiv. p. 1243 [2]. [It was the policy of Severus (the *African*) to level the distinctions which had subsisted between Italy and the provinces. Some acts of Hadrian had already pointed in the same direction. See Appendix 11. Caracalla, as we shall see, carried the policy to its logical end.]

[71] One of his most daring and wanton acts of power was the castration of a hundred free Romans, some of them married men, and even fathers of families; merely that his daughter, on her marriage with the young emperor, might be attended by a train of eunuchs worthy of an Eastern queen. Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1271 [1]. [The daughter's name was Fulvia Plautilla. Caracalla hated her.]

ing the fears of Plautianus, threatened to produce a revolution, and obliged the emperor, who still loved him, to consent with reluctance to his death.[72] After the fall of Plautianus, an eminent lawyer, the celebrated Papinian, was appointed to execute the motley office of Prætorian præfect.[73]

The senate oppressed by military despotism

Till the reign of Severus, the virtue, and even the good sense of the emperors had been distinguished by their zeal or affected reverence for the senate, and by a tender regard to the nice frame of civil policy instituted by Augustus. But the youth of Severus had been trained in the implicit obedience of camps, and his riper years spent in the despotism of military command. His haughty and inflexible spirit could not discover, or would not acknowledge, the advantage of preserving an intermediate power, however imaginary, between the emperor and the army. He disdained to profess himself the servant of an assembly that detested his person and trembled at his frown; he issued his commands, where his request would have proved as effectual; assumed the conduct and style of a sovereign and a conqueror, and exercised, without disguise, the whole legislative as well as the executive power.

New maxims of the imperial prerogative

The victory over the senate was easy and inglorious. Every eye and every passion were directed to the supreme magistrate, who possessed the arms and treasure of the state; whilst the senate, neither elected by the people, nor guarded by the military force, nor animated by public spirit, rested its declining authority on the frail and crumbling basis of ancient opinion. The fine theory of a republic insensibly vanished, and made way for the more natural and substantial feelings of monarchy. As the freedom and honours of Rome were successfully communicated to the provinces, in which the old government had been either unknown, or was remembered with abhorrence, the tradition of republican maxims was gradually obliterated. The Greek historians of the age of the Antonines[74] observe, with a malicious pleasure, that, although the sovereign of Rome, in compliance with an obsolete prejudice, abstained from the name of king, he possessed the full measure of regal power. In the reign of Severus, the senate was filled with polished and eloquent slaves from the eastern pro-

[72] Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1274 [4]. Herodian, l. iii. p. 122, 129 [12]. The grammarian of Alexandria seems, as it is not unusual, much better acquainted with this mysterious transaction; and more assured of the guilt of Plautianus than the Roman senator ventures to be. [Date 205 A.D.]

[73] [But not alone. He shared the office with Maecius Lætus.]

[74] Appian in Procem. [6].

vinces, who justified personal flattery by speculative principles of servitude. These new advocates of prerogative were heard with pleasure by the court, and with patience by the people, when they inculcated the duty of passive obedience, and descanted on the inevitable mischiefs of freedom. The lawyers and the historians concurred in teaching that the Imperial authority was held, not by the delegated commission, but by the irrevocable resignation, of the senate; that the emperor was freed from the restraint of civil laws, could command by his arbitrary will the lives and fortunes of his subjects, and might dispose of the empire as of his private patrimony.[75] The most eminent of the civil lawyers, and particularly Papinian, Paulus, and Ulpian, flourished under the house of Severus; and the Roman jurisprudence, having closely united itself with the system of monarchy, was supposed to have attained its full maturity and perfection.

The contemporaries of Severus, in the enjoyment of the peace and glory of his reign, forgave the cruelties by which it had been introduced. Posterity, who experienced the fatal effect of his maxims and example, justly considered him as the principal author of the decline of the Roman empire.[76]

[75] Dion Cassius seems to have written with no other view, than to form these opinions into an historical system. The Pandects will show how assiduously the lawyers, on their side, laboured in the cause of prerogative.

[76] [Cp. Appendix II.]

CHAPTER VI

The death of Severus—Tyranny of Caracalla—Usurpation of Macrinus—Follies of Elagabalus—Virtues of Alexander Severus—Licentiousness of the army—General state of the Roman Finances

Greatness and discontent of Severus

THE ascent to greatness, however steep and dangerous, may entertain an active spirit with the consciousness and exercise of its own powers: but the possession of a throne could never yet afford a lasting satisfaction to an ambitious mind. This melancholy truth was felt and acknowledged by Severus. Fortune and merit had, from an humble station, elevated him to the first place among mankind. He had been "all things," as he said himself, "and all was of little value".[1] Distracted with the care, not of acquiring, but of preserving, an empire, oppressed with age and infirmities, careless of fame,[2] and satiated with power, all his prospects of life were closed. The desire of perpetuating the greatness of his family was the only remaining wish of his ambition and paternal tenderness.

His wife the Empress Julia

Like most of the Africans, Severus was passionately addicted to the vain studies of magic and divination, deeply versed in the interpretation of dreams and omens, and perfectly acquainted with the science of judicial astrology; which, in almost every age except the present, has maintained its dominion over the mind of man. He had lost his first wife whilst he was governor of the Lyonnese Gaul.[3] In the choice of a second, he sought only to connect himself with some favourite of fortune; and, as soon as he had discovered that a young lady of Emesa in Syria had *a royal nativity,* he solicited and obtained her hand.[4] Julia

[1] Hist. August. p. 71 [x. 18]. "Omnia fui, et nihil expedit."

[2] Dion Cassius, l. lxxvi. p. 1284 [16].

[3] About the year 186. M. de Tillemont is miserably embarrassed with a passage of Dion, in which the Empress Faustina, who died in the year 175, is introduced as having contributed to the marriage of Severus and Julia (l. lxxiv. p. 1243 [3]). The learned compiler forgot that Dion is relating, not a real fact, but a dream of Severus; and dreams are circumscribed to no limits of time or space. Did M. de Tillemont imagine that marriages were *consummated* in the Temple of Venus at Rome? Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 389. Note 6.

[4] Hist. August. p. 65 [x. 3].

Domna (for that was her name) deserved all that the stars could promise her. She possessed, even in an advanced age, the attractions of beauty,[5] and united to a lively imagination a firmness of mind, and strength of judgment, seldom bestowed on her sex. Her amiable qualities never made any deep impression on the dark and jealous temper of her husband; but, in her son's reign, she administered the principal affairs of the empire with a prudence that supported his authority; and with a moderation that sometimes corrected his wild extravagancies.[6] Julia applied herself to letters and philosophy with some success, and with the most splendid reputation. She was the patroness of every art, and the friend of every man of genius.[7] The grateful flattery of the learned has celebrated her virtues; but, if we may credit the scandal of ancient history, chastity was very far from being the most conspicuous virtue of the Empress Julia.[8]

Their two sons, Caracalla and Geta

Two sons, Caracalla[9] and Geta, were the fruit of this marriage, and the destined heirs of the empire. The fond hopes of the father, and of the Roman world, were soon disappointed by these vain youths, who displayed the indolent security of hereditary princes, and a presumption that fortune would supply the place of merit and application. Without any emulation of virtue or talents, they discovered, almost from their infancy, a fixed and implacable antipathy for each other.

Their mutual aversion to each other

Their aversion, confirmed by years, and fomented by the arts of their interested favourites, broke out in childish, and gradually in more serious, competitions; and at length divided the theatre, the circus, and the court, into two factions, actuated by the hopes and fears of their respective leaders. The prudent emperor endeavoured, by every expedient of advice and authority, to allay this growing animosity. The unhappy discord of his sons clouded all his prospects, and threatened to overturn a throne raised with so much labour, cemented with so much blood, and guarded with every defence of arms and treasure. With an impartial hand he maintained between them an exact

[5] Hist. August. p. 85 [xiii. 10].

[6] Dion Cassius, l. lxxvii. p. 1304, 1312 [18 and lxxviii. 4].

[7] See a Dissertation of Menage, at the end of his edition of Diogenes Laertius, de Fœminis Philosophis.

[8] Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1285 [16]. Aurelius Victor [Cæsar, xx. 23].

[9] Bassianus was his first name, as it had been that of his maternal grandfather. During his reign he assumed the appellation of Antoninus, which is employed by lawyers and ancient historians. [But see next note.] After his death, the public indignation loaded him with the nick-names of Tarantus and Caracalla. The first was borrowed from a celebrated Gladiator, the second from a long Gallic gown which he distributed to the people of Rome. [Hist. Aug. x. 11.]

balance of favour, conferred on both the rank of Augustus, with the revered name of Antoninus; and for the first time the Roman world beheld three emperors.[10] Yet even this equal conduct served only to inflame the contest, whilst the fierce Caracalla asserted the right of primogeniture, and the milder Geta courted the affections of the people and the soldiers. In the anguish of a disappointed father, Severus foretold that the weaker of his sons would fall a sacrifice to the stronger; who, in his turn, would be ruined by his own vices.[11]

Three emperors

The Caledonian war, A.D. 208

In these circumstances the intelligence of a war in Britain, and of an invasion of the province by the barbarians of the North, was received with pleasure by Severus. Though the vigilance of his lieutenants might have been sufficient to repel the distant enemy, he resolved to embrace the honourable pretext of withdrawing his sons from the luxury of Rome, which enervated their minds and irritated their passions, and of inuring their youth to the toils of war and government. Notwithstanding his advanced age (for he was above threescore), and his gout, which obliged him to be carried in a litter, he transported himself in person into that remote island, attended by his two sons, his whole court, and a formidable army. He immediately passed the walls of Hadrian and Antoninus, and entered the enemy's country, with the design of completing the long-attempted conquest of Britain. He penetrated to the northern extremity of the island without meeting an enemy. But the concealed ambuscades of the Caledonians, who hung unseen on the rear and flanks of his army, the coldness of the climate, and the severity of a winter march across the hills and morasses of Scotland, are reported to have cost the Romans above fifty

[10] The elevation of Caracalla is fixed by the accurate M. de Tillemont to the year 198; the association of Geta, to the year 208. [Caracalla (the proper form is Caracallus) was made Cæsar in 196 at Viminacium, imperator under the name M. Aurelius Antoninus in 197, and finally Augustus with "tribunician power" in 198 (in the tenth year of his age). It is to be observed that on his first elevation Severus associated his name with the memory of Pertinax, and he appears on inscriptions as L. Septimius Severus Pertinax Augustus. But afterwards he resolved to affiliate his family to the more august house of the Antonines. In Imperial style he was the son of Marcus and brother of Commodus; both he and his sons were Antonines. He even thought of perpetuating *Antoninus* (like *Augustus*) as a synonym of the Imperial title. See Spartianus, Geta, ii. 2, *in animo habuit Severus ut omnes deinceps principes quemadmodum Augusti, ita etiam Antonini dicerentur idque amore Marci*, &c. As for the association of Geta as Augustus, it must be placed in Sept. or Oct. 209 A.D.; cp. Corp. Ins. Att. iii. p. 9.]

[11] Herodian, l. iii. p. 130 [13]. The lives of Caracalla and Geta, in the Augustan History.

thousand men.[12] The Caledonians at length yielded to the powerful and obstinate attack, sued for peace, and surrendered a part of their arms, and a large tract of territory.[13] But their apparent submission lasted no longer than the present terror. As soon as the Roman legions had retired, they resumed their hostile independence. Their restless spirit provoked Severus to send a new army into Caledonia, with the most bloody orders, not to subdue, but to extirpate the natives. They were saved by the death of their haughty enemy.[14]

Fingal and his heroes

This Caledonian war, neither marked by decisive events, nor attended with any important consequences, would ill deserve our attention; but it is supposed, not without a considerable degree of probability, that the invasion of Severus is connected with the most shining period of the British history or fable. Fingal, whose fame, with that of his heroes and bards, has been revived in our language by a recent publication, is said to have commanded the Caledonians in that memorable juncture, to have eluded the power of Severus, and to have obtained a signa victory on the banks of the Carun, in which the son of *the King of the World*, Caracul, fled from his arms along the fields of his pride.[15] Something of a doubtful mist still hangs over these Highland traditions; nor can it be entirely dispelled by the most ingenious researches of modern criticism:[16] but if we could, with safety, indulge the pleasing supposition that Fingal lived, and that Ossian sung, the striking contrast of the situation and manners of the contending nations might amuse a philosophic mind. The parallel would be little to the advantage of the more civilized people, if we compared the unrelenting revenge of Severus with the generous clemency of Fingal; the

Contrast of the Caledonians and the Romans

[12] [An exaggeration of Dion Cassius, lxxvi. 13. That some battles of importance were fought is proved by an inscription discovered some years ago (*Ephem. Epig.* iv. p. 327).]

[13] [The wall of Antoninus Pius had been abandoned; but Severus seems to have renewed the wall of Hadrian from Tunnocelum to Segedunum. Hist. Aug. x. 18, 2. Muro per transversam insulam ducto utrinque ad finem oceani munivit. Whence he got the name *Britannicus Maximus*.]

[14] Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1280, &c. [12]. Herodian, l. iii. p. 132, &c. [14].

[15] Ossian's Poems, vol. i. p. 175.

[16] That the Caracul of Ossian is the Caracalla of the Roman history, is, perhaps, the only point of British antiquity in which Mr. Macpherson and Mr. Whitaker are of the same opinion; and yet the opinion is not without difficulty. In the Caledonian war, the son of Severus was known only by the appellation of Antoninus; and it may seem strange that the Highland bard should describe him by a nick-name, invented four years afterwards, scarcely used by the Romans till after the death of that emperor, and seldom employed by the most ancient historians. See Dion, l. lxxviii. p. 1317 [9]. Hist. August. p. 89 [xiii. 9]. Aurel. Victor [epit. 21]. Euseb. in Chron. ad ann. 214.

timid and brutal cruelty of Caracalla, with the bravery, the tenderness, the elegant genius of Ossian; the mercenary chiefs who, from motives of fear or interest, served under the Imperial standard, with the freeborn warriors who started to arms at the voice of the King of Morven; if, in a word, we contemplated the untutored Caledonians, glowing with the warm virtues of nature, and the degenerate Romans, polluted with the mean vices of wealth and slavery.

Ambition of Caracalla

The declining health and last illness of Severus inflamed the wild ambition and black passions of Caracalla's soul. Impatient of any delay or division of empire, he attempted, more than once, to shorten the small remainder of his father's days, and endeavoured, but without success, to excite a mutiny among the troops.[17] The old emperor had often censured the misguided lenity of Marcus, who, by a single act of justice, might have saved the Romans from the tyranny of his worthless son. Placed in the same situation, he experienced how easily the rigour of a judge dissolves away in the tenderness of a parent. He deliberated, he threatened, but he could not punish; and this last and only instance of mercy was more fatal to the empire than a long series of cruelty.[18] The disorder of his mind irritated the pains of his body; he wished impatiently for death, and hastened the instant of it by his impatience. He expired at York in the sixty-fifth year of his life, and in the eighteenth of a glorious and successful reign. In his last moments he recommended concord to his sons, and his sons to the army. The salutary advice never reached the heart, or even the understanding, of the impetuous youths; but the more obedient troops, mindful of their oath of allegiance, and of the authority of their deceased master, resisted the solicitations of Caracalla, and proclaimed both brothers emperors of Rome. The new princes soon left the Caledonians in peace, returned to the capital, celebrated their father's funeral with divine honours, and were cheerfully acknowledged as lawful sovereigns by the senate, the people, and the provinces. Some pre-eminence of rank seems to have been allowed to the elder brother; but they both administered the empire with equal and independent power.[19]

Death of Severus, and accession of his two sons, A.D. 211, 4th February

Jealousy and hatred of the two emperors

Such a divided form of government would have proved a

[17] Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1282 [14]. Hist. August. p. 72 [x. 20]. Aurel. Victor.

[18] Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1283 [14]. Hist. August. p. 89 [xiii. 11, 3].

[19] Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1284 [15]. Herodian, l. iii. p. 135 [15]. [The title *Pont. Max.* seems to have been reserved for the elder brother; Geta is only *Pont.* on coins and inscriptions. Eckhel, vii. 230.]

source of discord between the most affectionate brothers. It was impossible that it could long subsist between two implacable enemies, who neither desired nor could trust a reconciliation. It was visible that one only could reign, and that the other must fall; and each of them, judging of his rival's designs by his own, guarded his life with the most jealous vigilance from the repeated attacks of poison or the sword. Their rapid journey through Gaul and Italy, during which they never ate at the same table, or slept in the same house, displayed to the provinces the odious spectacle of fraternal discord. On their arrival at Rome, they immediately divided the vast extent of the Imperial palace.[20] No communication was allowed between their apartments; the doors and passages were diligently fortified, and guards posted and relieved with the same strictness as in a besieged place. The emperors met only in public, in the presence of their afflicted mother; and each surrounded by a numerous train of armed followers. Even on these occasions of ceremony, the dissimulation of courts could ill disguise the rancour of their hearts.[21]

Fruitless negotiation for dividing the empire between them

This latent civil war already distracted the whole government, when a scheme was suggested that seemed of mutual benefit to the hostile brothers. It was proposed, that, since it was impossible to reconcile their minds, they should separate their interest, and divide the empire between them. The conditions of the treaty were already drawn with some accuracy. It was agreed, that Caracalla, as the elder brother, should remain in possession of Europe and the western Africa; and that he should relinquish the sovereignty of Asia and Egypt to Geta, who might fix his residence at Alexandria or Antioch, cities little inferior to Rome itself in wealth and greatness; that numerous

[20] Mr. Hume is justly surprised at a passage of Herodian (l. iv. p. 139 [1]), who, on this occasion, represents the Imperial palace as equal in extent to [greater than] the rest of Rome. The whole region of the Palatine Mount on which it was built occupied, at most, a circumference of eleven or twelve thousand feet. (See the Notitia and Victor, in Nardini's Roma Antica.) But we should recollect that the opulent senators had almost surrounded the city with their extensive gardens and suburb palaces, the greatest part of which had been gradually confiscated by the emperors. If Geta resided in the gardens that bore his name on the Janiculum and if Caracalla inhabited the gardens of Mæcenas on the Esquiline, the rival brothers were separated from each other by the distance of several miles; and yet the intermediate space was filled by the Imperial gardens of Sallust, of Lucullus, of Agrippa, of Domitian, of Caius, &c., all skirting round the city, and all connected with each other, and with the palace, by bridges thrown over the Tiber and the streets. But this explanation of Herodian would require, though it ill deserves, a particular dissertation, illustrated by a map of ancient Rome. [See Hume, Essay on Populousness of Ancient Nations.—Milman.]

[21] Herodian, l. iv. p. 139 [1].

armies should be constantly encamped on either side of the Thracian Bosphorus, to guard the frontiers of the rival monarchies; and that the senators of European extraction should acknowledge the sovereign of Rome, whilst the natives of Asia followed the emperor of the East. The tears of the empress Julia interrupted the negotiation, the first idea of which had filled every Roman breast with surprise and indignation. The mighty mass of conquest was so intimately connected by the hand of time and policy, that it required the most forcible violence to rend it asunder. The Romans had reason to dread that the disjointed members would soon be reduced by a civil war under the dominion of one master; but, if the separation was permanent, the division of the provinces must terminate in the dissolution of an empire whose unity had hitherto remained inviolate.[22]

Murder of Geta, A.D. 212, February 27

Had the treaty been carried into execution, the sovereign of Europe might soon have been the conqueror of Asia; but Caracalla obtained an easier though a more guilty victory. He artfully listened to his mother's entreaties, and consented to meet his brother in her apartment, on terms of peace and reconciliation. In the midst of their conversation, some centurions, who had contrived to conceal themselves, rushed with drawn swords upon the unfortunate Geta. His distracted mother strove to protect him in her arms; but in the unavailing struggle, she was wounded in the hand, and covered with the blood of her younger son, while she saw the elder animating and assisting[23] the fury of the assassins. As soon as the deed was perpetrated, Caracalla, with hasty steps and horror in his countenance, ran towards the Prætorian camp, as his only refuge, and threw himself on the ground before the statues of the tutelar deities.[24] The soldiers

[22] Herodian, l. iv. p. 144 [4]. [Yet, in this proposal, we can see foreshadowed the geographical division of the Empire among two or more Emperors, which was made a principle of government by Diocletian. The tendency to disruption between the eastern and western groups of provinces had been already seen in the revolt of Avidius Cassius, and the "tyranny" of Pescennius Niger. In fact, at the elevation of Severus, the four sovereignties of Diocletian,—the four Præfectures of Constantine—are shadowed forth. (1) Albinus in Gaul; (2) Julianus in Italy; (3) Severus in the Illyrian Peninsula; (4) Niger in Asia, are, in a sense, forerunners of Constantine, Maximian, Galerius, and Diocletian respectively.]

[23] Caracalla consecrated, in the temple of Serapis, the sword, with which, as he boasted, he had slain his brother Geta. Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1307 [23].

[24] Herodian, l. iv. p. 147 [4]. In every Roman camp there was a small chapel near the head-quarters, in which the statues of the tutelar deities were preserved and adored; and we may remark that the eagles, and other military ensigns, were in the first rank of these deities; an excellent institution, which confirmed discipline by the sanction of religion. See Lipsius de Militiâ Romanâ, iv. 5, v. 2.

attempted to raise and comfort him. In broken and disordered words he informed them of his imminent danger and fortunate escape: insinuating that he had prevented the designs of his enemy, and declared his resolution to live and die with his faithful troops. Geta had been the favourite of the soldiers; but complaint was useless, revenge was dangerous, and they still reverenced the son of Severus. Their discontent died away in idle murmurs, and Caracalla soon convinced them of the justice of his cause, by distributing in one lavish donative the accumulated treasures of his father's reign.[25] The real *sentiments* of the soldiers alone were of importance to his power or safety. Their declaration in his favour commanded the dutiful *professions* of the senate. The obsequious assembly was always prepared to ratify the decision of fortune; but as Caracalla wished to assuage the first emotions of public indignation, the name of Geta was mentioned with decency, and he received the funeral honours of a Roman emperor.[26] Posterity, in pity to his misfortune, has cast a veil over his vices. We consider that young prince as the innocent victim of his brother's ambition, without recollecting that he himself wanted power, rather than inclination, to consummate the same attempts of revenge and murder.

Remorse and cruelty of Caracalla

The crime went not unpunished. Neither business, nor pleasure, nor flattery, could defend Caracalla from the stings of a guilty conscience; and he confessed, in the anguish of a tortured mind, that his disordered fancy often beheld the angry forms of his father and his brother rising into life, to threaten and upbraid him.[27] The consciousness of his crime should have induced him to convince mankind, by the virtues of his reign, that the bloody deed had been the involuntary effect of fatal necessity. But the repentance of Caracalla only prompted him to remove from the world whatever could remind him of his guilt, or recall the memory of his murdered brother. On his return from the senate to the palace, he found his mother in the company of several noble matrons, weeping over the untimely fate of her younger son. The jealous emperor threatened them with instant death: the sentence was executed against Fadilla, the last remaining daughter of the Emperor Marcus; and even the afflicted Julia was obliged to silence her lamentations, to

[25] Herodian, l. iv. p. 148 [4]. Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1289 [3].

[26] Geta was placed among the gods. Sit *divus*, dum non sit *vivus*, said his brother. Hist. August. p. 91 [xiv. 2, 8]. Some marks of Geta's consecration are still found upon medals.

[27] Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1301 [15].

suppress her sighs, and to receive the assassin with smiles of joy and approbation. It was computed that, under the vague appellation of the friends of Geta, above twenty thousand persons of both sexes suffered death. His guards and freedmen, the ministers of his serious business, and the companions of his looser hours, those who by his interest had been promoted to any commands in the army or provinces, with the long connected chain of their dependants, were included in the proscription; which endeavoured to reach every one who had maintained the smallest correspondence with Geta, who lamented his death, or who even mentioned his name.[28] Helvius Pertinax, son to the prince of that name, lost his life by an unseasonable witticism.[29] It was a sufficient crime of Thrasea Priscus to be descended from a family in which the love of liberty seemed an hereditary quality.[30] The particular causes of calumny and suspicion were at length exhausted; and when a senator was accused of being a secret enemy to the government, the emperor was satisfied with the general proof that he was a man of property and virtue. From this well-grounded principle, he frequently drew the most bloody inferences.

Death of Papinian

The execution of so many innocent citizens was bewailed by the secret tears of their friends and families. The death of Papinian, the Prætorian præfect,[31] was lamented as a public calamity. During the last seven years of Severus, he had exercised the most important offices of the state, and, by his salutary influence, guided the emperor's steps in the paths of justice and moderation. In full assurance of his virtue and abilities, Severus, on his deathbed, had conjured him to watch over the prosperity and union of the Imperial family.[32] The honest labours of Papinian served only to inflame the hatred which Caracalla had already conceived against his father's minister. After the murder of Geta, the præfect was commanded to exert the powers

[28] Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1290 [4]. Herodian, l. iv. p. 150 [6]. Dion (p. 1298 [lxxvii. 12]) says that the comic poets no longer durst employ the name of Geta in their plays, and that the estates of those who mentioned it in their testaments were confiscated.

[29] Caracalla had assumed the names of several conquered nations; Pertinax observed, that the name of *Geticus* (he had obtained some advantage over the Goths or Getæ) would be a proper addition to Parthicus, Alemannicus, &c. Hist. August. p. 89 [xiii. 10, 6].

[30] Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1291 [5]. He was probably descended from Helvidius Priscus, and Thrasea Pætus, those patriots whose firm, but useless and unseasonable, virtue has been immortalized by Tacitus.

[31] [Dion says that Caracalla, on his accession, had deposed Papinian from this office; and Dion was in a position to know.]

[32] It is said that Papinian was himself a relation of the empress Julia.

of his skill and eloquence in a studied apology for that atrocious deed. The philosophic Seneca had condescended to compose a similar epistle to the senate, in the name of the son and assassin of Agrippina.[33] "That it was easier to commit than to justify a parricide," was the glorious reply of Papinian,[34] who did not hesitate between the loss of life and that of honour. Such intrepid virtue, which had escaped pure and unsullied from the intrigues of courts, the habits of business, and the arts of his profession, reflects more lustre on the memory of Papinian than all his great employments, his numerous writings, and the superior reputation as a lawyer, which he has preserved through every age of the Roman jurisprudence.[35]

His tyranny extended over the whole empire

It had hitherto been the peculiar felicity of the Romans, and in the worst of times their consolation, that the virtue of the emperors was active, and their vice indolent. Augustus, Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus, visited their extensive dominions in person, and their progress was marked by acts of wisdom and beneficence. The tyranny of Tiberius, Nero, and Domitian, who resided almost constantly at Rome, or in the adjacent villas, was confined to the senatorial and equestrian orders.[36] But Caracalla was the common enemy of mankind. He left the capital (and he never returned to it)[37] about a year after the murder of Geta. The rest of his reign was spent in the several provinces of the empire, particularly those of the East, and every province was, by turns, the scene of his rapine and cruelty. The senators, compelled by fear to attend his capricious motions, were obliged to provide daily entertainments at an immense expense, which he abandoned with contempt to his guards; and to erect, in every city, magnificent palaces and theatres, which he either disdained to visit, or ordered to be immediately thrown down. The most wealthy families were ruined by partial fines and confiscations, and the great body of his subjects oppressed by ingenious and aggravated taxes.[38] In A.D. 213

[33] Tacit. Annal. xiv. 2.

[34] Hist. August. p. 88 [xiii. 8, 5].

[35] With regard to Papinian, see Heineccius's Historia Juris Romani, l. 330, &c. [The true cause of Papinian's execution was probably that he was highly unpopular with the soldiers, whose wishes Caracalla was always ready to humour.]

[36] Tiberius and Domitian never moved from the neighbourhood of Rome. Nero made a short journey into Greece. "Et laudatorum Principum usus ex æquo quamvis procul agentibus. Sævi proximis ingruunt." Tacit. Hist. iv. 75.

[37] [There is a coin, however, which suggests that Caracalla returned to Italy and Rome in 214 A.D., after his successful campaigns on the Rhine and Neckar; Eckhel, vii. 211.]

[38] Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1294 [9].

the midst of peace, and upon the slightest provocation, he issued his commands, at Alexandria in Egypt, for a general massacre. From a secure post in the temple of Serapis, he viewed and directed the slaughter of many thousand citizens, as well as strangers, without distinguishing either the number or the crime of the sufferers; since, as he coolly informed the senate, *all* the Alexandrians, those who had perished and those who had escaped, were alike guilty.[39]

Relaxation of discipline

The wise instructions of Severus never made any lasting impression on the mind of his son, who, although not destitute of imagination and eloquence, was equally devoid of judgment and humanity.[40] One dangerous maxim, worthy of a tyrant, was remembered and abused by Caracalla, "To secure the affections of the army, and to esteem the rest of his subjects as of little moment".[41] But the liberality of the father had been restrained by prudence, and his indulgence to the troops was tempered by firmness and authority. The careless profusion of the son was the policy of one reign, and the inevitable ruin both of the army and of the empire. The vigour of the soldiers, instead of being confirmed by the severe discipline of camps, melted away in the luxury of cities. The excessive increase of their pay and donatives[42] exhausted the state to enrich the

[39] Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1307 [23]. Herodian, l. iv. p. 158 [9]. The former represents it as a cruel massacre, the latter as a perfidious one too. It seems probable that the Alexandrians had irritated the tyrant by their railleries, and perhaps by their tumults. [The punishment of Alexandria, which was given over to the soldiers to plunder, was hardly such an act of caprice as Gibbon represents it. The harshness of Caracalla to that city was inherited from Severus; under both reigns Alexandrine coins are very rare. There seem to have been serious conspiracies in Egypt, which demanded summary dealing.]

[40] Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1296 [11].

[41] Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1284 [15]. M. Wotton (Hist. of Rome, p. 330) suspects that this maxim was invented by Caracalla himself and attributed to his father.

[42] Dion (l. lxxviii. p. 1343 [36]) informs us that the extraordinary gifts of Caracalla to the army amounted annually to seventy millions of drachmæ (about two millions three hundred and fifty thousand pounds). There is another passage in Dion, concerning the military pay, infinitely curious; were it not obscure, imperfect, and probably corrupt. The best sense seems to be, that the Prætorian guards received twelve hundred and fifty drachmæ (forty pounds) a year. (Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1307 [24].) Under the reign of Augustus, they were paid at the rate of two drachmæ, or denarii, per day, 720 a year (Tacit. Annal. i. 17). Domitian, who increased the soldiers' pay one-fourth, must have raised the Prætorians to 960 drachmæ (Gronovius de Pecuniâ Veteri, l. iii. c. 2). These successive augmentations ruined the empire, for, with the soldiers' pay, their numbers too were increased. We have seen the Prætorians alone increased from 10,000 to 50,000 men. [It has been pointed out by Guizot that Gibbon misunderstood the passage of Dion, which refers not to the annual pay of soldiers, but to the recompense given at the end of their term of service. But, as Valois saw, the numbers seem to be transposed, for the prætorians received a larger sum than the legionaries.]

military order, whose modesty in peace, and service in war, is best secured by an honourable poverty. The demeanour of Caracalla was haughty and full of pride; but with the troops he forgot even the proper dignity of his rank, encouraged their insolent familiarity, and, neglecting the essential duties of a general, affected to imitate the dress and manners of a common soldier.

Murder of Caracalla, A.D. 217 8th March[43]

It was impossible that such a character and such a conduct as that of Caracalla could inspire either love or esteem; but, as long as his vices were beneficial to the armies, he was secure from the danger of rebellion. A secret conspiracy, provoked by his own jealousy, was fatal to the tyrant. The Prætorian præfecture was divided between two ministers. The military department was intrusted to Adventus, an experienced rather than an able soldier; and the civil affairs were transacted by Opilius Macrinus, who, by his dexterity in business, had raised himself, with a fair character, to that high office. But his favour varied with the caprice of the emperor, and his life might depend on the slightest suspicion, or the most casual circumstance. Malice or fanaticism had suggested to an African, deeply skilled in the knowledge of futurity, a very dangerous prediction, that Macrinus and his son were destined to reign over the empire. The report was soon diffused through the province; and, when the man was sent in chains to Rome, he still asserted, in the presence of the præfect of the city, the faith of his prophecy. That magistrate, who had received the most pressing instructions to inform himself of the *successors* of Caracalla, immediately communicated the examination of the African to the Imperial court, which at that time resided in Syria. But notwithstanding the diligence of the public messengers, a friend of Macrinus found means to apprize him of the approaching danger. The emperor received the letters from Rome; and, as he was then engaged in the conduct of a chariot race, he delivered them unopened to the Prætorian præfect, directing him to dispatch the ordinary affairs, and to report the more important business that might be contained in them. Macrinus read his fate and resolved to prevent it. He inflamed the discontents of some inferior officers, and employed the hand of Martialis, a desperate soldier, who had been refused the rank of centurion. The devotion of Caracalla had prompted him to make a pilgrimage from Edessa to the celebrated temple of the Moon at Carrhæ. He was attended by a body of cavalry;

[43] [8th April, see Clinton ad ann.]

but having stopped on the road for some necessary occasion, his guards preserved a respectful distance, and Martialis, approaching his person under a pretence of duty, stabbed him with a dagger. The bold assassin was instantly killed by a Scythian archer of the Imperial guard. Such was the end of a monster whose life disgraced human nature, and whose reign accused the patience of the Romans.[44] The grateful soldiers forgot his vices, remembered only his partial liberality, and obliged the senate to prostitute their own dignity and that of religion by granting him a place among the gods. Whilst he was upon earth, Alexander the Great was the only hero whom this god deemed worthy his admiration. He assumed the name and ensigns of Alexander, formed a Macedonian phalanx of guards,[45] persecuted the disciples of Aristotle, and displayed with a puerile enthusiasm the only sentiment by which he discovered any regard for virtue or glory. We can easily conceive that, after the battle of Narva and the conquest of Poland, Charles the Twelfth (though he still wanted the more elegant accomplishments of the son of Philip) might boast of having rivalled his valour and magnanimity; but in no one action of his life did Caracalla express the faintest resemblance of the Macedonian hero, except in the murder of a great number of his own and of his father's friends.[46]

Imitation of Alexander

Election and character of Macrinus

After the extinction of the house of Severus, the Roman world remained three days without a master. The choice of the army (for the authority of a distant and feeble senate was little regarded) hung in anxious suspense; as no candidate presented himself whose distinguished birth and merit could engage their attachment and unite their suffrages. The decisive weight of the Prætorian guards elevated the hopes of their præfects, and these powerful ministers began to assert their *legal* claim to fill the vacancy of the Imperial throne. Adventus, however, the senior præfect, conscious of his age and infirmities, of his

[44] Dion, l. lxxviii. p. 1312 [5, 4]. Herodian, l. iv. p. 168 [13]. [Gibbon does not give this emperor due credit for his ability as an administrator (carrying out his father's policy) and his important military works.]

[45] [Those who have studied the question say that Caracalla's development of the phalanx was, under the circumstances of the empire, a benefit and a necessity. Hadrian had already pointed the way to this tactical change.]

[46] The fondness of Caracalla for the name and ensigns of Alexander, is still preserved on the medals of that emperor. See Spanheim, de Usu Numismatum. Dissertat. xii. Herodian (l. iv. p. 154 [8]) had seen very ridiculous pictures, in which a figure was drawn with one side of the face like Alexander, and the other like Caracalla. [Admiration for Alexander as an ideal was a feature of the age. Sulla and Hannibal were also special favourites of Caracalla.]

small reputation and his smaller abilities, resigned the dangerous honour to the crafty ambition of his colleague Macrinus, whose well dissembled grief removed all suspicion of his being accessory to his master's death.[47] The troops neither loved nor esteemed his character. They cast their eyes around in search of a competitor, and at last yielded with reluctance to his promises of unbounded liberality and indulgence. A short time after his accession he conferred on his son Diadumenianus, at the age of only ten years, the Imperial title and the popular name of Antoninus.[48] The beautiful figure of the youth, assisted by an additional donative, for which the ceremony furnished a pretext, might attract, it was hoped, the favour of the army, and secure the doubtful throne of Macrinus.

A.D. 217, March 11

The authority of the new sovereign had been ratified by the cheerful submission of the senate and provinces. They exulted in their unexpected deliverance from a hated tyrant, and it seemed of little consequence to examine into the virtues of the successor of Caracalla. But as soon as the first transports of joy and surprise had subsided, they began to scrutinize the merits of Macrinus with a critical severity, and to arraign the hasty choice of the army. It had hitherto been considered as a fundamental maxim of the constitution that the emperor must always be chosen in the senate, and the sovereign power, no longer exercised by the whole body, was always delegated to one of its members. But Macrinus was not a senator.[49] The sudden elevation of the Prætorian præfects betrayed the meanness of their origin; and the equestrian order was still in possession of that great office, which commanded with arbitrary sway the lives and fortunes of the senate. A murmur of indignation was heard, that a man, whose obscure[50] extraction

Discontent of the senate

[47] Herodian, l. iv. p. 169 [14]. Hist. August. p. 94 [xv. 4].

[48] [M. Opellius (Opilius in Hist. Aug.) Antoninus Diadumenianus nobiliss. Cæsar. Macrinus himself took the name of Severus.]

[49] Dion, l. lxxxix. p. 1350 [1]. Elagabalus reproached his predecessor, with daring to seat himself on the throne; though, as Prætorian præfect, he could not have been admitted into the senate after the voice of the crier had cleared the house. The personal favour of Plautianus and Sejanus had broke through the established rule. They rose indeed from the equestrian order; but they preserved the præfecture with the rank of senator, and even with the consulship. [Macrinus was the first man of equestrian order who became emperor.]

[50] He was a native of Cæsarea, in Numidia, and began his fortune by serving in the household of Plautian, from whose ruin he narrowly escaped. His enemies asserted that he was born a slave, and had exercised, among other infamous professions, that of Gladiator. The fashion of aspersing the birth and condition of an adversary seems to have lasted from the time of the Greek orators to the learned grammarians of the last age.

had never been illustrated by any signal service, should dare to invest himself with the purple, instead of bestowing it on some distinguished senator, equal in birth and dignity to the splendour of the Imperial station. As soon as the character of Macrinus was surveyed by the sharp eye of discontent, some vices, and many defects, were easily discovered. The choice of his ministers was in several instances justly censured, and the dissatisfied people, with their usual candour, accused at once his indolent tameness and his excessive severity.[51]

and the army

His rash ambition had climbed a height where it was difficult to stand with firmness, and impossible to fall without instant destruction. Trained in the arts of courts and the forms of civil business, he trembled in the presence of the fierce and undisciplined multitude, over whom he had assumed the command: his military talents were despised, and his personal courage suspected: a whisper that circulated in the camp, disclosed the fatal secret of the conspiracy against the late emperor, aggravated the guilt of murder by the baseness of hypocrisy, and heightened contempt by detestation. To alienate the soldiers, and to provoke inevitable ruin, the character of a reformer was only wanting; and such was the peculiar hardship of his fate, that Macrinus was compelled to exercise that invidious office. The prodigality of Caracalla had left behind it a long train of ruin and disorder: and, if that worthless tyrant had been capable of reflecting on the sure consequences of his own conduct, he would perhaps have enjoyed the dark prospect of the distress and calamities which he bequeathed to his successors.

Macrinus attempts a reformation of the army

In the management of this necessary reformation, Macrinus proceeded with a cautious prudence which would have restored health and vigour to the Roman army in an easy and almost imperceptible manner. To the soldiers already engaged in the service, he was constrained to leave the dangerous privileges and extravagant pay given by Caracalla; but the new recruits were received on the more moderate, though liberal, establishment of Severus, and gradually formed to modesty and obedience.[52] One fatal error destroyed the salutary effects of this

[51] Both Dion and Herodian speak of the virtues and vices of Macrinus with candour and impartiality; but the author of his Life, in the Augustan History, seems to have implicitly copied some of the venal writers employed by Elagabalus to blacken the memory of his predecessor.

[52] Dion, l. lxxviii. p. 1336 [28]. The sense of the author is as clear as the intention of the emperor; but M. Wotton has mistaken both, by understanding the distinction, not of veterans and recruits, but of old and new legions. History of Rome, p. 347.

judicious plan. The numerous army, assembled in the East by the late emperor, instead of being immediately dispersed by Macrinus through the several provinces, was suffered to remain united in Syria during the winter that followed his elevation. In the luxurious idleness of their quarters, the troops viewed their strength and numbers, communicated their complaints, and revolved in their minds the advantages of another revolution. The veterans, instead of being flattered by the advantageous distinction, were alarmed by the first steps of the emperor, which they considered as the presage of his future intentions. The recruits, with sullen reluctance, entered on a service, whose labours were increased while its rewards were diminished by a covetous and unwarlike sovereign. The murmurs of the army swelled with impunity into seditious clamours; and the partial mutinies betrayed a spirit of discontent and disaffection, that waited only for the slightest occasion to break out on every side into a general rebellion. To minds thus disposed the occasion soon presented itself.

Death of the Empress Julia. Education, pretensions, and revolt of Elagabalus, called at first Bassianus and Antoninus

The Empress Julia had experienced all the vicissitudes of fortune. From an humble station, she had been raised to greatness, only to taste the superior bitterness of an exalted rank. She was doomed to weep over the death of one of her sons, and over the life of the other. The cruel fate of Caracalla, though her good sense must have long taught her to expect it, awakened the feelings of a mother and of an empress. Notwithstanding the respectful civility expressed by the usurper towards the widow of Severus, she descended with a painful struggle into the condition of a subject, and soon withdrew herself by a voluntary death from the anxious and humiliating dependence.[53] Julia Mæsa, her sister, was ordered to leave the court and Antioch. She retired to Emesa with an immense fortune, the fruit of twenty years' favour, accompanied by her two daughters, Soæmias and Mamæa, each of whom was a widow, and each had an only son. Bassianus, for that was the name of the son of Soæmias, was consecrated to the honourable ministry of high priest of the Sun; and this holy vocation, embraced either from prudence or superstition, contributed to raise the Syrian youth to the empire of Rome. A numerous body of troops were stationed at Emesa; and, as the severe discipline of Macrinus had constrained them to pass the winter encamped, they were eager to revenge the cruelty of such unaccustomed hardships.

[53] Dion, l. lxxviii. p. 1330 [23]. The abridgment of Xiphilin, though less particular, is in this place clearer than the original.

The soldiers, who resorted in crowds to the temple of the Sun, beheld with veneration and delight the elegant dress and figure of the young pontiff: they recognized, or thought that they recognized, the features of Caracalla, whose memory they now adored. The artful Mæsa saw and cherished their rising partiality, and, readily sacrificing her daughter's reputation to the fortune of her grandson, she insinuated that Bassianus was the natural son of their murdered sovereign. The sums distributed by her emissaries with a lavish hand[54] silenced every objection, and the profusion sufficiently proved the affinity, or at least the resemblance, of Bassianus with the great original. The young Antoninus (for he had assumed and polluted that respectable name) was declared emperor by the troops of Emesa, asserted his hereditary right, and called aloud on the armies to follow the standard of a young and liberal prince, who had taken up arms to revenge his father's death and the oppression of the military order.[55]

A.D. 218 May 16

Defeat and death of Macrinus

Whilst a conspiracy of women and eunuchs was concerted with prudence, and conducted with rapid vigour, Macrinus, who by a decisive motion might have crushed his infant enemy, floated between the opposite extremes of terror and security, which alike fixed him inactive at Antioch. A spirit of rebellion diffused itself through all the camps and garrisons of Syria, successive detachments murdered their officers,[56] and joined the party of the rebels; and the tardy restitution of military pay and privileges was imputed to the acknowledged weakness of Macrinus. At length he marched out of Antioch, to meet the increasing and zealous army of the young pretender. His own troops seemed to take the field with faintness and reluctance; but, in the heat of battle,[57] the Prætorian guards, almost by an

A.D. 218 7th June

[54] [The temple of the Sun was rich.]

[55] According to Lampridius (Hist. August. p. 135 [xviii. 60]) Alexander Severus lived twenty-nine years, three months, and seven days. As he was killed March 19, 235, he was born December 12, 205, and was consequently about this time thirteen years old, as his elder cousin might be about seventeen. This computation suits much better the history of the young princes than that of Herodian (l. v. p. 181 [3]), who represents them as three years younger; whilst, by an opposite error of chronology, he lengthens the reign of Elagabalus two years beyond its real duration. For the particulars of the conspiracy, see Dion, l. lxxviii. p. 1339 [31]. Herodian, l. v. p. 184 [3]. [The author's conclusion is probably mistaken. Alexander was born October 1, 208, and was thus thirteen and a half years old on his elevation in March, 222 (Aur. Victor, Cæs. 24, 1). The statement of Lampridius may well be a slip.]

[56] By a most dangerous proclamation of the pretended Antoninus, every soldier who brought in his officer's head became entitled to his private estate, as well as to his military commission.

[57] Dion, l. lxxviii. p. 1344 [37]. Herodian, l. v. p. 186 [4]. The battle was fought near the village of Immæ, about two and twenty miles from Antioch.

involuntary impulse, asserted the superiority of their valour and discipline. The rebel ranks were broken; when the mother and grandmother of the Syrian prince, who, according to their eastern custom, had attended the army, threw themselves from their covered chariots, and, by exciting the compassion of the soldiers, endeavoured to animate their drooping courage. Antoninus himself, who in the rest of his life never acted like a man, in this important crisis of his fate approved himself a hero, mounted his horse, and, at the head of his rallied troops, charged sword in hand among the thickest of the enemy; whilst the eunuch Gannys, whose occupation had been confined to female cares and the soft luxury of Asia, displayed the talents of an able and experienced general. The battle still raged with doubtful violence, and Macrinus might have obtained the victory, had he not betrayed his own cause by a shameful and precipitate flight. His cowardice served only to protract his life a few days, and to stamp deserved ignominy on his misfortunes. It is scarcely necessary to add that his son Diadumenianus was involved in the same fate. As soon as the stubborn Prætorians could be convinced that they fought for a prince who had basely deserted them, they surrendered to the conqueror; the contending parties of the Roman army, mingling tears of joy and tenderness, united under the banners of the imagined son of Caracalla, and the East[58] acknowledged with pleasure the first emperor of Asiatic extraction.

Elagabalus writes to the senate

The letters of Macrinus had condescended to inform the senate of the slight disturbance occasioned by an impostor in Syria, and a decree immediately passed, declaring the rebel and his family public enemies; with a promise of pardon, however, to such of his deluded adherents as should merit it by an immediate return to their duty. During the twenty days that elapsed from the declaration to the victory of Antoninus (for in so short an interval was the fate of the Roman world decided), the capital and the provinces, more especially those of the East, were distracted with hopes and fears, agitated with tumult, and stained with a useless effusion of civil blood, since whosoever of the rivals prevailed in Syria must reign over the empire. The specious letters in which the young conqueror announced his victory to the obedient senate were filled with professions of virtue and moderation; the shining examples of Marcus and Augustus he should ever consider as the great rule of his

[58] [In this episode, the opposition between East and West was probably an important element.]

administration; and he affected to dwell with pride on the striking resemblance of his own age and fortunes with those of Augustus, who in the earliest youth had revenged by a successful war the murder of his father. By adopting the style of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, son of Antoninus, and grandson of Severus, he tacitly asserted his hereditary claim to empire; but, by assuming the tribunitian and proconsular powers[59] before they had been conferred on him by a decree of the senate, he offended the delicacy of Roman prejudice. This new and injudicious violation of the constitution was probably dictated either by the ignorance of his Syrian courtiers, or the fierce disdain of his military followers.[60]

Picture of Elagabalus, A.D. 219

As the attention of the new emperor was diverted by the most trifling amusements, he wasted many months in his luxurious progress from Syria to Italy, passed at Nicomedia the first winter after his victory, and deferred till the ensuing summer his triumphal entry into the capital. A faithful picture, however, which preceded his arrival, and was placed by his immediate order over the altar of Victory in the senate-house, conveyed to the Romans the just but unworthy resemblance of his person and manners. He was drawn in his sacerdotal robes of silk and gold, after the loose flowing fashion of the Medes and Phœnicians; his head was covered with a lofty tiara, his numerous collars and bracelets were adorned with gems of an inestimable value. His eye-brows were tinged with black, and his cheeks painted with an artificial red and white.[61] The grave senators confessed with a sigh, that, after having long experienced the stern tyranny of their own countrymen, Rome was at length humbled beneath the effeminate luxury of Oriental despotism.

His superstition

The sun was worshipped at Emesa under the name of Elagabalus,[62] and under the form of a black conical stone, which, as it was universally believed, had fallen from heaven on that sacred place. To this protecting deity, Antoninus, not without some reason, ascribed his elevation to the throne. The display of superstitious gratitude was the only serious business of his

[59] [*Pius felix proconsul trib. pot.* was the form stereotyped by Caracalla. The senate conferred the title *Augusta* on Julia Mæsa.]

[60] Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1353 [4].

[61] Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1363 [14]. Herodian, l. v. p. 189 [5].

[62] This name is derived by the learned, from two Syriac words, *Ela*, a god, and *Gabal*, to form, the forming, or plastic God; a proper, and even happy epithet for the Sun. Wotton's History of Rome, p. 378. [The newer derivation is *al gebal*, "the mountain". The Greeks made the name into *Helio*-gabalos by a tempting popular etymology.]

reign. The triumph of the god of Emesa over all the religions of the earth, was the great object of his zeal and vanity; and the appellation of Elagabalus (for he presumed as pontiff and favourite to adopt that sacred name) was dearer to him than all the titles of Imperial greatness.[63] In a solemn procession through the streets of Rome, the way was strewed with gold dust; the black stone, set in precious gems, was placed on a chariot drawn by six milk-white horses richly caparisoned. The pious emperor held the reins, and, supported by his ministers, moved slowly backwards, that he might perpetually enjoy the felicity of the divine presence. In a magnificent temple raised on the Palatine Mount, the sacrifices of the god Elagabalus were celebrated with every circumstance of cost and solemnity. The richest wines, the most extraordinary victims, and the rarest aromatics, were profusely consumed on his altar. Around the altar a chorus of Syrian damsels performed their lascivious dances to the sound of barbarian music, whilst the gravest personages of the state and army, clothed in long Phœnician tunics, officiated in the meanest functions, with affected zeal and secret indignation.[64]

To this temple, as to the common centre of religious worship, the Imperial fanatic attempted to remove the Ancilia, the Palladium,[65] and all the sacred pledges of the faith of Numa. A crowd of inferior deities attended in various stations the majesty of the god of Emesa; but his court was still imperfect, till a female of distinguished rank was admitted to his bed. Pallas had been first chosen for his consort; but, as it was dreaded that her warlike terrors might affright the soft delicacy of a Syrian deity, the Moon, adored by the Africans[66] under the name of Astarte, was deemed a more suitable companion for the Sun. Her image, with the rich offerings of her temple as a marriage portion, was transported with solemn pomp from Carthage to Rome, and the day of these mystic nuptials was a general festival in the capital and throughout the empire.[67]

[63] [His imperial name was M. Aurelius Antoninus, that of his reputed father.]

[64] Herodian, l. v. 190 [5].

[65] He broke into the sanctuary of Vesta, and carried away a statue, which he supposed to be the Palladium; but the vestals boasted that, by a pious fraud, they had imposed a counterfeit image on the profane intruder. Hist. August. p. 103 [xvii. 6].

[66] [That is, the Phœnician settlers in Africa; for Astarte was a Syrian goddess.]

[67] Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1360 [12]. Herodian, l. v. p. 193 [6]. The subjects of the empire were obliged to make liberal presents to the new-married couple; and whatever they had promised during the life of Elagabalus was carefully exacted under the administration of Mamæa.

His profligate and effeminate luxury

A rational voluptuary adheres with invariable respect to the temperate dictates of nature, and improves the gratifications of sense by social intercourse, endearing connexions, and the soft colouring of taste and imagination. But Elagabalus (I speak of the emperor of that name), corrupted by his youth, his country, and his fortune, abandoned himself to the grossest pleasures with ungoverned fury, and soon found disgust and satiety in the midst of his enjoyments. The inflammatory powers of art were summoned to his aid: the confused multitude of women, of wines, and of dishes, and the studied variety of attitudes and sauces, served to revive his languid appetites. New terms and new inventions in these sciences, the only ones cultivated and patronized by the monarch,[68] signalized his reign, and transmitted his infamy to succeeding times. A capricious prodigality supplied the want of taste and elegance; and, whilst Elagabalus lavished away the treasures of his people in the wildest extravagance, his own voice and that of his flatterers applauded a spirit and magnificence unknown to the tameness of his predecessors. To confound the order of seasons and climates,[69] to sport with the passions and prejudices of his subjects, and to subvert every law of nature and decency, were in the number of his most delicious amusements. A long train of concubines, and a rapid succession of wives, among whom was a vestal virgin, ravished by force from her sacred asylum,[70] were insufficient to satisfy the impotence of his passions. The master of the Roman world affected to copy the dress and manners of the female sex, preferred the distaff to the sceptre, and dishonoured the principal dignities of the empire by distributing them among his numerous lovers; one of whom was publicly invested with the title and authority of the emperor's, or, as he more properly styled himself, of the empress's husband.[71]

[68] The invention of a new sauce was liberally rewarded: but if it was not relished, the inventor was confined to eat of nothing else, till he had discovered another more agreeable to the Imperial palate. Hist. August. p. 111 [xvii. 29].

[69] He never would eat sea-fish except at a great distance from the sea; he then would distribute vast quantities of the rarest sorts, brought at an immense expense, to the peasants of the inland country. Hist. August. p. 109 [xvii. 23].

[70] Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1358 [9]. Herodian, l. v. p. 192 [6].

[71] Hierocles enjoyed that honour; but he would have been supplanted by one Zoticus, had he not contrived, by a potion, to enervate the powers of his rival, who, being found on trial unequal to his reputation, was driven with ignominy from the palace. Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1363, 1364 [15, 16]. A dancer was made præfect of the city, a charioteer præfect of the watch, a barber præfect of the provisions. These three ministers, with many inferior officers, were all recommended *enormitate membrorum*. Hist. August. p. 105 [xvii. 12].

Contempt of decency which distinguished the Roman tyrants

It may seem probable the vices and follies of Elagabalus have been adorned by fancy and blackened by prejudice.[72] Yet, confining ourselves to the public scenes displayed before the Roman people, and attested by grave and contemporary historians, their inexpressible infamy surpasses that of any other age or country. The licence of an eastern monarch is secluded from the eye of curiosity by the inaccessible walls of the seraglio. The sentiments of honour and gallantry have introduced a refinement of pleasure, a regard for decency, and a respect for the public opinion, into the modern courts of Europe; but the corrupt and opulent nobles of Rome gratified every vice that could be collected from the mighty conflux of nations and manners. Secure of impunity, careless of censure, they lived without restraint in the patient and humble society of their slaves and parasites. The emperor, in his turn, viewing every rank of his subjects with the same contemptuous indifference, asserted without control his sovereign privilege of lust and luxury.

Discontents of the army

The most worthless of mankind are not afraid to condemn in others the same disorders which they allow in themselves; and can readily discover some nice difference of age, character, or station, to justify the partial distinction. The licentious soldiers, who had raised to the throne the dissolute son of Caracalla, blushed at their ignominious choice, and turned with disgust from that monster, to contemplate with pleasure the opening virtues of his cousin Alexander, the son of Mamæa. The crafty Mæsa, sensible that her grandson Elagabalus must inevitably destroy himself by his own vices, had provided another and surer support of her family. Embracing a favourable moment of fondness and devotion, she had persuaded the young emperor to adopt Alexander, and to invest him with the title of Cæsar, that his own divine occupations might be no longer interrupted by the care of the earth. In the second rank, that amiable prince soon acquired the affections of the public, and excited the tyrant's jealousy, who resolved to terminate the dangerous competition either by corrupting the manners, or by taking away the life, of his rival. His arts proved unsuccessful; his vain designs were constantly discovered by his own loquacious folly, and disappointed by those virtuous and faithful servants whom the prudence of Mamæa had placed about the person of her son. In a hasty sally of passion, Elagabalus resolved to execute by force what he had been unable to compass by fraud, and by a despotic sentence

Alexander Severus declared Cæsar, A.D. 221

[72] Even the credulous compiler of his Life, in the Augustan History (p. 111 [*ib.* 30]), is inclined to suspect that his vices may have been exaggerated.

degraded his cousin from the rank and honours of Cæsar. The message was received in the senate with silence, and in the camp with fury. The Prætorian guards swore to protect Alexander, and to revenge the dishonoured majesty of the throne. The tears and promises of the trembling Elagabalus, who only begged them to spare his life, and to leave him in the possession of his beloved Hierocles, diverted their just indignation; and they contented themselves with empowering their præfects to watch over the safety of Alexander and the conduct of the emperor.[73]

Sedition of the guards and murder of Elagabalus, A.D. 222, 10th March

It was impossible that such a reconciliation should last, or that even the mean soul of Elagabalus could hold an empire on such humiliating terms of dependence. He soon attempted, by a dangerous experiment, to try the temper of the soldiers. The report of the death of Alexander, and the natural suspicion that he had been murdered, inflamed their passions into fury, and the tempest of the camp could only be appeased by the presence and authority of the popular youth. Provoked at this new instance of their affection for his cousin, and their contempt for his person, the emperor ventured to punish some of the leaders of the mutiny. His unseasonable severity proved instantly fatal to his minions, his mother, and himself. Elagabalus was massacred by the indignant Prætorians, his mutilated corpse dragged through the streets of the city, and thrown into the Tiber. His memory was branded with eternal infamy by the senate; the justice of whose decree has been ratified by posterity.[74]

Accession of Alexander Severus

In the room of Elagabalus, his cousin Alexander was raised to the throne by the Prætorian guards. His relation to the family of Severus, whose name he assumed,[75] was the same as that of

[73] Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1366 [19]. Herodian, l. v. p. 195——201 [8]. Hist. August. p. 105 [xvii. 13]. The last of the three historians [Lampridius] seems to have followed the best authors in his account of the revolution. [His chief authority was Marius Maximus.]

[74] The æra of the death of Elagabalus, and of the accession of Alexander, has employed the learning and ingenuity of Pagi, Tillemont, Valsecchi, Vignoli, and Torre, bishop of Adria. The question is most assuredly intricate; but I still adhere to the authority of Dion, the truth of whose calculations is undeniable, and the purity of whose text is justified by the agreement of Xiphilin, Zonaras, and Cedrenus. Elagabalus reigned three years, nine months, and four days, from his victory over Macrinus, and was killed March 10, 222. But what shall we reply to the medals, undoubtedly genuine, which reckon the fifth year of his tribunitian power? We shall reply, with the learned Valsecchi, that the usurpation of Macrinus was annihilated, and that the son of Caracalla dated his reign from his father's death. After resolving this great difficulty, the smaller knots of this question may be easily untied, or cut asunder. [Exact date uncertain, but probably falls in the first half of March, 222; cp., however, Clinton, *Fasti Romani*, i. 234, 236. Eckhel, 8, 430.]

[75] [M. Aurelius Severus Alexander.]

his predecessor; his virtue and his danger had already endeared him to the Romans, and the eager liberality of the senate conferred upon him, in one day, the various titles and powers of the Imperial dignity.[76] But, as Alexander was a modest and dutiful youth of only seventeen years of age, the reins of government were in the hands of two women, of his mother Mamæa, and of Mæsa, his grandmother. After the death of the latter, who survived but a short time the elevation of Alexander, Mamæa remained the sole regent of her son and of the empire.

Power of his mother Mamæa

In every age and country, the wiser, or at least the stronger, of the two sexes, has usurped the powers of the state, and confined the other to the cares and pleasures of domestic life. In hereditary monarchies, however, and especially in those of modern Europe, the gallant spirit of chivalry, and the law of succession, have accustomed us to allow a singular exception; and a woman is often acknowledged the absolute sovereign of a great kingdom, in which she would be deemed incapable of exercising the smallest employment, civil or military. But as the Roman emperors were still considered as the generals and magistrates of the republic, their wives and mothers, although distinguished by the name of Augusta, were never associated to their personal honours; and a female reign would have appeared an inexpiable prodigy in the eyes of those primitive Romans, who married without love, or loved without delicacy and respect.[77] The haughty Agrippina aspired, indeed, to share the honours of the empire, which she had conferred on her son; but her mad ambition, detested by every citizen who felt for the dignity of Rome, was disappointed by the artful firmness of Seneca and Burrhus.[78] The good sense, or the indifference, of succeeding princes, restrained them from offending the prejudices of their subjects; and it was reserved for the profligate Elagabalus to disgrace the acts of the senate with the name of his mother Soæmias, who was placed by the side of the consuls, and subscribed, as a regular member, the decrees of the legislative assembly. Her more prudent sister, Mamæa, declined the use-

[76] Hist. August. p. 114. [xvii. 1]. By this unusual precipitation, the senate meant to confound the hopes of pretenders, and prevent the factions of the armies.

[77] Metellus Numidicus, the censor, acknowledged to the Roman people, in a public oration, that, had kind Nature allowed us to exist without the help of woman, we should be delivered from a very troublesome companion; and he could recommend matrimony only as the sacrifice of private pleasure to public duty. Aulus Gellius, i. 6.

[78] Tacit. Annal. xiii. 5. [After Agrippina, the title Augusta had no political significance.]

less and odious prerogative, and a solemn law was enacted, excluding women for ever from the senate, and devoting to the infernal gods the head of the wretch by whom this sanction should be violated.[79] The substance, not the pageantry, of power was the object of Mamæa's manly ambition. She maintained an absolute and lasting empire over the mind of her son, and in his affection the mother could not brook a rival. Alexander, with her consent, married the daughter of a Patrician;[80] but his respect for his father-in-law, and love for the empress, were inconsistent with the tenderness or interest of Mamæa. The patrician was executed on the ready accusation of treason, and the wife of Alexander driven with ignominy from the palace, and banished into Africa.[81]

Wise and moderate administration

Notwithstanding this act of jealous cruelty, as well as some instances of avarice, with which Mamæa is charged, the general tenor of her administration was equally for the benefit of her son and of the empire. With the approbation of the senate, she chose sixteen of the wisest and most virtuous senators, as a perpetual council of state, before whom every public business of moment was debated and determined. The celebrated Ulpian, equally distinguished by his knowledge of, and his respect for, the laws of Rome, was at their head; and the prudent firmness of this aristocracy restored order and authority to the government. As soon as they had purged the city from foreign superstition and luxury, the remains of the capricious tyranny of Elagabalus, they applied themselves to remove his worthless creatures from every department of public administration, and to supply their places with men of virtue and ability. Learning, and the love of justice, became the only recommendations for civil offices; valour, and the love of discipline, the only qualifications for military employments.[82]

Education and virtuous temper of Alexander

But the most important care of Mamæa and her wise coun-

[79] Hist. August. p. 102, 107 [xvii. 4 and 18].

[80] [Sallustia Barbia Orbiana, daughter of Sallustius Macrinus, who conspired against the life of Alexander. Gibbon is too ready to assume that Mamæa was to blame.]

[81] Dion, l. lxxx. p. 1369 [2]. Herodian, l. vi. p. 206 [1]. Hist. August. p. 131 [xviii. 49]. Herodian represents the patrician as innocent. The Augustan History, on the authority of Dexippus, condemns him as guilty of a conspiracy against the life of Alexander. It is impossible to pronounce between them: but Dion is an irreproachable witness of the jealousy and cruelty of Mamæa towards the young empress, whose hard fate Alexander lamented, but durst not oppose.

[82] Herodian, l. vi. p. 203 [1]. Hist. August. p. 119 [xviii. 15]. The latter insinuates that, when any law was to be passed, the council was assisted by a number of able lawyers and experienced senators, whose opinions were separately given and taken down in writing.

sellors was to form the character of the young emperor, on whose personal qualities the happiness or misery of the Roman world must ultimately depend. The fortunate soil assisted, and even prevented, the hand of cultivation. An excellent understanding soon convinced Alexander of the advantages of virtue, the pleasure of knowledge, and the necessity of labour. A natural mildness and moderation of temper preserved him from the assaults of passion and the allurements of vice. His unalterable regard for his mother, and his esteem for the wise Ulpian, guarded his unexperienced youth from the poison of flattery.

Journal of his ordinary life

The simple journal of his ordinary occupations exhibits a pleasing picture of an accomplished emperor,[83] and, with some allowance for the difference of manners, might well deserve the imitation of modern princes. Alexander rose early; the first moments of the day were consecrated to private devotion, and his domestic chapel was filled with the images of those heroes who, by improving or reforming human life, had deserved the grateful reverence of posterity. But, as he deemed the service of mankind the most acceptable worship of the gods, the greatest part of his morning hours was employed in his council, where he discussed public affairs, and determined private causes, with a patience and discretion above his years. The dryness of business was relieved by the charms of literature; and a portion of time was always set apart for his favourite studies of poetry, history, and philosophy. The works of Virgil and Horace, the republics of Plato and Cicero, formed his taste, enlarged his understanding, and gave him the noblest ideas of man and government. The exercises of the body succeeded to those of the mind; and Alexander, who was tall, active, and robust, surpassed most of his equals in the gymnastic arts. Refreshed by the use of the bath and a slight dinner, he resumed, with new vigour, the business of the day, and, till the hour of supper, the principal meal of the Romans, he was attended by his secretaries, with whom he read and answered the multitude of letters, memorials, and petitions, that must have been addressed to the master of the greatest part of the world. His table was served with the most frugal simplicity; and, whenever he was at liberty to consult his own inclination, the company consisted of a few select friends, men of learning and virtue, amongst whom Ulpian was constantly invited. Their conversation was familiar and

[83] See his life in the Augustan History. The undistinguishing compiler has buried these interesting anecdotes under a load of trivial and unmeaning circumstances.

instructive; and the pauses were occasionally enlivened by the recital of some pleasing composition, which supplied the place of the dancers, comedians, and even gladiators, so frequently summoned to the tables of the rich and luxurious Romans.[84] The dress of Alexander was plain and modest, his demeanour courteous and affable: at the proper hours his palace was open to all his subjects, but the voice of a crier was heard, as in the Eleusinian mysteries, pronouncing the same salutary admonition: "Let none enter these holy walls, unless he is conscious of a pure and innocent mind".[85]

General happiness of the Roman world, A.D. 222-235

Such an uniform tenor of life, which left not a moment for vice or folly, is a better proof of the wisdom and justice of Alexander's government than all the trifling details preserved in the compilation of Lampridius. Since the accession of Commodus the Roman world had experienced, during a term of forty years, the successive and various vices of four tyrants. From the death of Elagabalus it enjoyed an auspicious calm of thirteen years. The provinces, relieved from the oppressive taxes invented by Caracalla and his pretended son, flourished in peace and prosperity under the administration of magistrates, who were convinced by experience that to deserve the love of the subjects was their best and only method of obtaining the favour of their sovereign. While some gentle restraints were imposed on the innocent luxury of the Roman people, the price of provisions and the interest of money were reduced by the paternal care of Alexander, whose prudent liberality, without distressing the industrious, supplied the wants and amusements of the populace. The dignity, the freedom, the authority of the senate was restored; and every virtuous senator might approach the person of the emperor without a fear and without a blush.

Alexander refuses the name of Antoninus

The name of Antoninus, ennobled by the virtues of Pius and Marcus, had been communicated by adoption to the dissolute Verus, and by descent to the cruel Commodus. It became the honourable appellation of the sons of Severus, was bestowed on young Diadumenianus, and at length prostituted to the infamy of the high priest of Emesa. Alexander, though pressed by the studied, and perhaps sincere, importunity of the senate, nobly refused the borrowed lustre of a name; whilst in his whole conduct he laboured to restore the glories and felicity of the age of the genuine Antonines.[86]

[84] See the 13th Satire of Juvenal.

[85] Hist. August. p. 119 [xviii. 18].

[86] See in the Hist. August. p. 116, 117 [xviii. 6-11], the whole contest between Alexander and the senate, extracted from the journals of that assembly. It

In the civil administration of Alexander, wisdom was enforced by power, and the people, sensible of the public felicity, repaid their benefactor with their love and gratitude. There still remained a greater, a more necessary, but a more difficult enterprise: the reformation of the military order, whose interest and temper, confirmed by long impunity, rendered them impatient of the restraints of discipline, and careless of the blessings of public tranquillity. In the execution of his design the emperor affected to display his love, and to conceal his fear, of the army. The most rigid economy in every other branch of the administration supplied a fund of gold and silver for the ordinary pay and the extraordinary rewards of the troops. In their marches he relaxed the severe obligation of carrying seventeen days' provision on their shoulders. Ample magazines were formed along the public roads, and as soon as they entered the enemy's country, a numerous train of mules and camels waited on their haughty laziness. As Alexander despaired of correcting the luxury of his soldiers, he attempted, at least, to direct it to objects of martial pomp and ornament, fine horses, splendid armour, and shields enriched with silver and gold. He shared whatever fatigues he was obliged to impose, visited, in person, the sick and wounded, preserved an exact register of their services and his own gratitude, and expressed, on every occasion, the warmest regard for a body of men, whose welfare, as he affected to declare, was so closely connected with that of the state.[87] By the most gentle arts he laboured to inspire the fierce multitude with a sense of duty, and to restore at least a faint image of that discipline to which the Romans owed their empire over so many other nations, as warlike and more powerful than themselves. But his prudence was vain, his courage fatal, and the attempt towards a reformation served only to inflame the ills it was meant to cure.

He attempts to reform the army

The Prætorian guards were attached to the youth of Alexander. They loved him as a tender pupil, whom they had saved from a tyrant's fury, and placed on the Imperial throne. That amiable prince was sensible of the obligation; but, as his gratitude was restrained within the limits of reason and justice, they soon were more dissatisfied with the virtues of Alexander than they

Seditions of the Prætorian guards, and murder of Ulpian

happened on the sixth of March, probably of the year 223, when the Romans had enjoyed, almost a twelvemonth, the blessings of his reign. Before the appellation of Antoninus was offered him as a title of honour, the senate waited to see whether Alexander would not assume it as a family name.

[87] It was a favourite saying of the emperor's, Se milites magis servare, quam seipsum; quod salus publica in his esset. Hist. August. p. 130 [xviii. 47].

had ever been with the vices of Elagabalus. Their præfect, the wise Ulpian, was the friend of the laws and of the people; he was considered as the enemy of the soldiers, and to his pernicious counsels every scheme of reformation was imputed. Some trifling accident blew up their discontent into a furious mutiny; and a civil war raged, during three days, in Rome, whilst the life of that excellent minister was defended by the grateful people.[88] Terrified, at length, by the sight of some houses in flames, and by the threats of a general conflagration, the people yielded with a sigh, and left the virtuous but unfortunate Ulpian to his fate. He was pursued into the Imperial palace, and massacred at the feet of his master, who vainly strove to cover him with the purple, and to obtain his pardon from the inexorable soldiers. Such was the deplorable weakness of government that the emperor was unable to revenge his murdered friend and his insulted dignity, without stooping to the arts of patience and dissimulation. Epagathus, the principal leader of the mutiny, was removed from Rome, by the honourable employment of præfect of Egypt; from that high rank he was gently degraded to the government of Crete; and when, at length, his popularity among the guards was effaced by time and absence, Alexander ventured to inflict the tardy, but deserved, punishment of his crimes.[89] Under the reign of a just and virtuous prince, the tyranny of the army threatened with instant death his most faithful ministers, who were suspected of an intention to correct their intolerable disorders. The historian Dion Cassius had commanded the Pannonian legions with the spirit of ancient discipline. Their brethren of Rome, embracing the common cause of military licence, demanded the head of the reformer. Alexander, however, instead of yielding to their seditious clamours, showed a just sense of his merit and services, by appointing him his colleague in the consulship, and defraying from his own treasury the expense of that vain dignity; but, as it was justly apprehended that if the soldiers beheld him with the ensigns of his office they would revenge

Danger of Dion Cassius

[88] [Gibbon has fallen into error by confusing different occasions. There is no reason to suppose that Ulpian's life was in danger during the street battles between the populace and guards. They disobeyed his discipline then, but it was in a later mutiny, directed against himself, that he was slain. See Zonaras, xii. 15, and Dion, lxxx. 2.]

[89] Though the author of the life of Alexander (Hist. August. p. 132 [xviii. 51]), mentions the sedition raised against Ulpian by the soldiers, he conceals the catastrophe, as it might discover a weakness in the administration of his hero. From this designed omission, we may judge of the weight and candour of that author.

the insult in his blood, the nominal first magistrate of the states retired, by the emperor's advice, from the city, and spent the greatest part of his consulship at his villas in Campania.[90]

Tumults of the legions

The lenity of the emperor confirmed the insolence of the troops; the legions imitated the example of the guards, and defended their prerogative of licentiousness with the same furious obstinacy. The administration of Alexander was an unavailing struggle against the corruption of his age. In Illyricum, in Mauritania, in Armenia, in Mesopotamia, in Germany, fresh mutinies perpetually broke out; his officers were murdered, his authority was insulted, and his life at last sacrificed to the fierce discontents of the army.[91] One particular fact well deserves to be recorded, as it illustrates the manners of the troops, and exhibits a singular instance of their return to a sense of duty and obedience. Whilst the emperor lay at Antioch, in his Persian expedition, the particulars of which we shall hereafter relate, the punishment of some soldiers, who had been discovered in the baths of women, excited a sedition in the legion to which they belonged. Alexander ascended his tribunal, and with a modest firmness represented to the armed multitude the absolute necessity, as well as his inflexible resolution, of correcting the vices introduced by his impure predecessor, and of maintaining the discipline, which could not be relaxed without the ruin of the Roman name and empire. Their clamours interrupted his mild expostulation. "Reserve your shouts," said the undaunted emperor, "till you take the field against the Persians, the Germans, and the Sarmatians. Be silent in the presence of your sovereign and benefactor, who bestows upon you the corn, the clothing, and the money of the provinces. Be silent, or I shall no longer style you soldiers, but *citizens*,[92] if those indeed who disclaim the laws of Rome deserve to be ranked among the meanest of the people." His menaces inflamed the fury of the legion, and their brandished arms already threatened his person. "Your courage," resumed the

Firmness of the emperor

[90] For an account of Ulpian's fate and his own danger, see the mutilated conclusion of Dion's History, l. lxxx. p. 1371 [4].

[91] Annotat. Reimar. ad Dion Cassius, l. lxxx. p. 1369 [2].

[92] Julius Cæsar had appeased a sedition with the same word, *Quirites:* which, thus opposed to *Soldiers*, was used in a sense of contempt, and reduced the offenders to the less honourable condition of mere citizens. Tacit. Annal. i. 43. [The truth of this anecdote of Alexander's firmness has been suspected by recent historians, and Schiller suggests that it may have been due to the ambiguity of the name *Severus*. It is clear that, if the story is true, Alexander was consciously imitating Julius.]

intrepid Alexander, "would be more nobly displayed in the field of battle; *me* you may destroy, you cannot intimidate; and the severe justice of the republic would punish your crime and revenge my death." The legion still persisted in clamorous sedition, when the emperor pronounced, with a loud voice, the decisive sentence, "Citizens! lay down your arms, and depart in peace to your respective habitations". The tempest was instantly appeased; the soldiers, filled with grief and shame, silently confessed the justice of their punishment and the power of discipline, yielded up their arms and military ensigns, and retired in confusion, not to their camp, but to the several inns of the city. Alexander enjoyed, during thirty days, the edifying spectacle of their repentance; nor did he restore them to their former rank in the army, till he had punished with death those tribunes whose connivance had occasioned the mutiny. The grateful legion served the emperor whilst living, and revenged him when dead.[93]

Defects of his reign and character

The resolutions of the multitude generally depend on a moment; and the caprice of passion might equally determine the seditious legion to lay down their arms at the emperor's feet, or to plunge them into his breast. Perhaps, if the singular transaction had been investigated by the penetration of a philosopher, we should discover the secret causes which on that occasion authorized the boldness of the prince and commanded the obedience of the troops; and perhaps, if it had been related by a judicious historian, we should find this action, worthy of Cæsar himself, reduced nearer to the level of probability and the common standard of the character of Alexander Severus. The abilities of that amiable prince seem to have been inadequate to the difficulties of his situation, the firmness of his conduct inferior to the purity of his intentions. His virtues, as well as the vices of Elagabalus, contracted a tincture of weakness and effeminacy from the soft climate of Syria, of which he was a native; though he blushed at his foreign origin, and listened with a vain complacency to the flattering genealogists, who derived his race from the ancient stock of Roman nobility.[94] The pride and avarice of his mother cast a shade on the glories of his reign; and by exacting from his riper years the same dutiful obedience which she had justly claimed from his unex-

[93] Hist. August. p. 132 [xviii. 54].

[94] From the Metelli. Hist. August. p. 129 [xviii. 44]. The choice was judicious. In one short period of twelve years, the Metelli could reckon seven consulships, and five triumphs. See Velleius Paterculus, ii. 11, and the Fasti.

perienced youth, Mamæa exposed to public ridicule both her son's character and her own.[95] The fatigues of the Persian war irritated the military discontent; the unsuccessful event degraded the reputation of the emperor as a general, and even as a soldier. Every cause prepared, and every circumstance hastened, a revolution, which distracted the Roman empire with a long series of intestine calamities.

Digression on the finances of the empire

The dissolute tyranny of Commodus, the civil wars occasioned by his death, and the new maxims of policy introduced by the house of Severus, had all contributed to increase the dangerous power of the army, and to obliterate the faint image of laws and liberty that was still impressed on the minds of the Romans. This internal change, which undermined the foundations of the empire, we have endeavoured to explain with some degree of order and perspicuity. The personal characters of the emperors, their victories, laws, follies and fortunes, can interest us no further than as they are connected with the general history of the Decline and Fall of the monarchy. Our constant attention to that great object will not suffer us to overlook a most important edict of Antoninus Caracalla, which communicated to all the free inhabitants of the empire the name and privileges of Roman citizens. His unbounded liberality flowed not, however, from the sentiments of a generous mind; it was the sordid result of avarice,[96] and will naturally be illustrated by some observations on the finances of that state, from the victorious ages of the commonwealth to the reign of Alexander Severus.

Establishment

The siege of Veii in Tuscany, the first considerable enterprise of the Romans, was protracted to the tenth year, much less by the strength of the place than by the unskilfulness of the besiegers. The unaccustomed hardships of so many winter

[95] The life of Alexander, in the Augustan History, is the mere idea of a perfect prince, an awkward imitation of the Cyropædia. The account of his reign, as given by Herodian, is rational and moderate, consistent with the general history of the age; and, in some of the most invidious particulars, confirmed by the decisive fragments of Dion. Yet from a very paltry prejudice, the greater number of our modern writers abuse Herodian, and copy the Augustan History. See Mess. de Tillemont and Wotton. From the opposite prejudice, the Emperor Julian (in Cæsarib. p. 315) dwells with a visible satisfaction on the effeminate weakness of the *Syrian*, and the ridiculous avarice of his mother.

[96] [Schiller is possibly right in his view (i. 751) that military, not financial, considerations were the chief motive in determining Caracalla's edict. Italy was no longer able to recruit the legions, and the auxilia were gradually taking their place, while the Germans were stepping into the place of the auxilia. The extension of citizenship was also expedient, in face of the barbarians who were pressing into the empire.]

campaigns, at the distance of near twenty miles from home,[97] required more than common encouragements; and the senate wisely prevented the clamours of the people, by the institution of a regular pay for the soldiers, which was levied by a general tribute, assessed according to an equitable proportion on the property of the citizens.[98] During more than two hundred years after the conquest of Veii, the victories of the republic added less to the wealth than to the power of Rome. The states of Italy paid their tribute in military service only, and the vast force, both by sea and land, which was exerted in the Punic wars, was maintained at the expense of the Romans themselves. That high-spirited people (such is often the generous enthusiasm of freedom) cheerfully submitted to the most excessive but voluntary burdens, in the just confidence that they should speedily enjoy the rich harvest of their labours. Their expectations were not disappointed. In the course of a few years, the riches of Syracuse, of Carthage, of Macedonia, and of Asia, were brought in triumph to Rome. The treasures of Perseus alone amounted to near two millions sterling, and the Roman people, the sovereign of so many nations, was for ever delivered from the weight of taxes.[99] The increasing revenue of the provinces was found sufficient to defray the ordinary establishment of war and government, and the superfluous mass of gold and silver was deposited in the temple of Saturn, and reserved for any unforeseen emergency of the state.[100]

and abolition of the tribute on Roman citizens

History has never perhaps suffered a greater or more irreparable injury than in the loss of that curious register bequeathed by Augustus to the senate, in which that experienced prince so accurately balanced the revenues and expenses of the Roman empire.[101] Deprived of this clear and comprehensive estimate, we are reduced to collect a few imperfect hints from such of the

Tributes of the provinces

[97] According to the more accurate Dionysius, the city itself was only an hundred stadia, or twelve miles and a half from Rome; though some out-posts might be advanced farther on the side of Etruria. Nardini, in a professed treatise, has combated the popular opinion and the authority of two popes, and has removed Veii from Città Castellana, to a little spot called Isola, in the midway between Rome and the lake Bracciano.

[98] See the 4th [c. 59] and 5th [c. 7] books of Livy. In the Roman census, property, power and taxation, were commensurate with each other.

[99] Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xxxiii. c. 3. Cicero de Officiis, ii. 22. Plutarch. in P. Æmil. p. 275 [38].

[100] See a fine description of this accumulated wealth of ages, in Lucan's Phars. l. iii. v. 155, &c.

[101] Tacit. in Annal. i. 11. It seems to have existed in the time of Appian. [The Breviarium Imperii; cp. Dion, lvi. 33.]

ancients as have accidently turned aside from the splendid to the more useful parts of history. We are informed that, by the conquests of Pompey, the tributes of Asia were raised from fifty to one hundred and thirty-five millions of drachms, or about four millions and a half sterling.[102] Under the last and most indolent of the Ptolemies, the revenue of Egypt is said to have amounted to twelve thousand five hundred talents; a sum equivalent to more than two millions and a half of our money, but which was afterwards considerably improved by the more exact economy of the Romans, and the increase of the trade of Ethiopia and India.[103] Gaul was enriched by rapine, as Egypt was by commerce, and the tributes of those two great provinces have been compared as nearly equal to each other in value.[104] The ten thousand Euboic or Phœnician talents, about four millions sterling,[105] which vanquished Carthage was condemned to pay within the term of fifty years, were a slight acknowledgment of the superiority of Rome,[106] and cannot bear the least proportion with the taxes afterwards raised both on the lands and on the persons of the inhabitants, when the fertile coast of Africa was reduced into a province.[107]

of Asia

of Egypt

of Gaul

of Africa

Spain, by a very singular fatality, was the Peru and Mexico of the old world. The discovery of the rich western continent by the Phœnicians, and the oppression of the simple natives, who were compelled to labour in their own mines for the benefit of strangers, form an exact type of the more recent history of Spanish America.[108] The Phœnicians were acquainted only with the sea coast of Spain; avarice as well as ambition carried the arms of Rome and Carthage into the heart of the country, and almost every part of the soil was found pregnant with copper, silver, and gold. Mention is made of a mine near Carthagena which yielded every day twenty-five thousand drachms of silver, or about three hundred thousand pounds a

of Spain

[102] Plutarch. in Pompeio, p. 642 [45. There is little doubt that Plutarch means they were raised to eighty-five millions.]

[103] Strabo, l. xvii. p. 798.

[104] Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 39. He seems to give the preference to the revenue of Gaul.

[105] The Euboic, the Phœnician, and Alexandrian talents, were double in weight to the Attic. See Hooper on ancient weights and measures, p. iv. c. 5. It is very probable that the same talent was carried from Tyre to Carthage. [The ratio of the Euboic to the Attic talent after the time of Solon was about 4 to 3.]

[106] Polyb. l. xv. c. 2.

[107] Appian in Punicis, p. 84.

[108] Diodorus Siculus, l. v. [37]. Cadiz was built by the Phœnicians a little more than a thousand years before Christ. See Vell. Paterc. i. 2.

year.[109] Twenty thousand pounds weight of gold was annually received from the provinces of Asturia, Gallicia, and Lusitania.[110]

of the Isle of Gyarus

We want both leisure and materials to pursue this curious inquiry through the many potent states that were annihilated in the Roman empire. Some notion, however, may be formed of the revenue of the provinces where considerable wealth had been deposited by nature, or collected by man, if we observe the severe attention that was directed to the abodes of solitude and sterility. Augustus once received a petition from the inhabitants of Gyarus, humbly praying that they might be relieved from one third of their excessive impositions. Their whole tax amounted indeed to no more than one hundred and fifty drachms, or about five pounds; but Gyarus was a little island, or rather a rock, of the Ægean Sea, destitute of fresh water and every necessary of life, and inhabited only by a few wretched fishermen.[111]

Amount of the revenue

From the faint glimmerings of such doubtful and scattered lights, we should be inclined to believe, 1st, That (with every fair allowance for the difference of times and circumstances) the general income of the Roman provinces could seldom amount to less than fifteen or twenty millions of our money;[112] and, 2ndly, That so ample a revenue must have been fully adequate to all the expenses of the moderate government instituted by Augustus, whose court was the modest family of a private senator, and whose military establishment was calculated for the defence of the frontiers, without any aspiring views of conquest, or any serious apprehension of a foreign invasion.

Taxes on Roman citizens instituted by Augustus

Notwithstanding the seeming probability of both these conclusions, the latter of them at least is positively disowned by the language and conduct of Augustus. It is not easy to determine whether, on this occasion, he acted as the common father of the Roman world, or as the oppressor of liberty; whether he wished to relieve the provinces, or to impoverish

[109] Strabo, l. iii. p. 148.

[110] Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xxxiii. c. 3. He mentions likewise a silver mine in Dalmatia, that yielded every day fifty pounds to the state.

[111] Strabo, l. x. p. 485. Tacit. Annal. iii. 69, and iv. 30. See in Tournefort (Voyages au Levant, Lettre viii.) a very lively picture of the actual misery of Gyarus.

[112] Lipsius de magnitudine Romanâ (l. ii. c. iii.) computes the revenue at one hundred and fifty millions of gold crowns; but his whole book, though learned and ingenious, betrays a very heated imagination. [For the inquiry touching the revenue of the empire we have not sufficient data to make even an approximate estimate.]

the senate and the equestrian order. But no sooner had he assumed the reins of government than he frequently intimated the insufficiency of the tributes, and the necessity of throwing an equitable proportion of the public burden upon Rome and Italy. In the prosecution of this unpopular design, he advanced, however, by cautious and well-weighed steps. The introduction of customs was followed by the establishment of an excise, and the scheme of taxation was completed by an artful assessment on the real and personal property of the Roman citizens, who had been exempted from any kind of contribution above a century and a half.

The customs

I. In a great empire like that of Rome, a natural balance of money must have gradually established itself. It has been already observed that, as the wealth of the provinces was attracted to the capital by the strong hand of conquest and power, so a considerable part of it was restored to the industrious provinces by the gentle influence of commerce and arts. In the reign of Augustus and his successors,[113] duties were imposed on every kind of merchandise, which through a thousand channels flowed to the great centre of opulence and luxury; and in whatsoever manner the law was expressed, it was the Roman purchaser, and not the provincial merchant, who paid the tax.[114] The rate of the customs varied from the eighth to the fortieth part of the value of the commodity; and we have a right to suppose that the variation was directed by the unalterable maxims of policy: that a higher duty was fixed on the articles of luxury than on those of necessity, and that the productions raised or manufactured by the labour of the subjects of the empire were treated with more indulgence than was shown to the pernicious, or at least the unpopular, commerce of Arabia and India.[115] There is still extant a long but imperfect catalogue of eastern commodities, which about the time of Alexander Severus were subject to the payment of duties: cinnamon, myrrh, pepper, ginger, and the whole tribe of aromatics; a great variety of precious stones, among which the diamond was the most remarkable for its price, and the emerald for its beauty:[116] Parthian and Babylonian leather,

[113] [But also in force before.]

[114] Tacit. Annal. xiii. 31.

[115] See Pliny (Hist. Natur. l. vi. c. 28, l. xii. c. 18). His observation, that the Indian commodities were sold at Rome at a hundred times their original price, may give us some notion of the produce of the customs, since that original price amounted to more than eight hundred thousand pounds.

[116] The ancients were unacquainted with the art of cutting diamonds.

cottons, silks, both raw and manufactured, ebony, ivory, and eunuchs.[117] We may observe that the use and value of those effeminate slaves gradually rose with the decline of the empire.

The excise

II. The excise, introduced by Augustus after the civil wars, was extremely moderate, but it was general.[118] It seldom exceeded one *per cent.*; but it comprehended whatever was sold in the markets or by public auction, from the most considerable purchases of land and houses to those minute objects which can only derive a value from their infinite multitude and daily consumption. Such a tax, as it affects the body of the people, has ever been the occasion of clamour and discontent. An emperor well acquainted with the wants and resources of the state was obliged to declare, by a public edict, that the support of the army depended in a great measure on the produce of the excise.[119]

Tax on legacies and inheritances

III. When Augustus resolved to establish a permanent military force for the defence of his government against foreign and domestic enemies, he instituted a peculiar treasury for the pay of the soldiers, the rewards of the veterans, and the extraordinary expenses of war. The ample revenue of the excise, though peculiarly appropriated to those uses, was found inadequate. To supply the deficiency, the emperor suggested a new tax of five *per cent.* on all legacies and inheritances. But the nobles of Rome were more tenacious of property than of freedom. Their indignant murmurs were received by Augustus with his usual temper. He candidly referred the whole business to the senate, and exhorted them to provide for the public service by some other expedient of a less odious nature. They were divided and perplexed. He insinuated to them that their obstinacy would oblige him to *propose* a general land-tax and capitation. They acquiesced in silence.[120] The new imposition on legacies and inheritances was however mitigated by some restrictions. It did not take place unless the object was of a certain value, most probably of fifty or an hundred pieces of gold:[121] nor could it be exacted from the nearest of kin on the

[117] M. Bouchaud, in his treatise de l'Impôt chez les Romains, has transcribed this catalogue from the Digest, and attempts to illustrate it by a very prolix commentary.

[118] [It was imposed in Rome and Italy; but cannot be proved for the provinces.]

[119] Tacit. Annal. i. 78. Two years afterwards, the reduction of the poor kingdom of Cappadocia gave Tiberius a pretence for diminishing the excise to one half; but the relief was of a very short duration.

[120] Dion Cassius, l. lv. p. 799 [25], l. lvi. p. 825 [28]. [This tax was introduced 6 A.D.]

[121] The sum is only fixed by conjecture.

father's side.[122] When the rights of nature and property were thus secured, it seemed reasonable that a stranger, or a distant relation, who acquired an unexpected accession of fortune, should cheerfully resign a twentieth part of it for the benefit of the state.[123]

Such a tax, plentiful as it must prove in every wealthy community, was most happily suited to the situation of the Romans, who could frame their arbitrary wills, according to the dictates of reason or caprice, without any restraint from the modern fetters of entails and settlements. From various causes, the partiality of paternal affection often lost its influence over the stern patriots of the commonwealth and the dissolute nobles of the empire; and if the father bequeathed to his son the fourth part of his estate, he removed all ground of legal complaint.[124] But a rich childless old man was a domestic tyrant, and his power increased with his years and infirmities. A servile crowd, in which he frequently reckoned prætors and consuls, courted his smiles, pampered his avarice, applauded his follies, served his passions, and waited with impatience for his death. The arts of attendance and flattery were formed into a most lucrative science; those who professed it acquired a peculiar appellation; and the whole city, according to the lively descriptions of satire, was divided between two parties, the hunters and their game.[125] Yet while so many unjust and extravagant wills were every day dictated by cunning, and subscribed by folly, a few were the result of rational esteem and virtuous gratitude. Cicero, who had so often defended the lives and fortunes of his fellow-citizens, was rewarded with legacies to the amount of an hundred and seventy thousand pounds;[126] nor do the friends of the younger Pliny seem to have been less generous to that amiable orator.[127] Whatever was the motive of the testator, the treasury claimed, without distinction, the twentieth part of his estate; and in the course of two or three generations, the whole property of the subject must have gradually passed through the coffers of the state.

Suited to the laws and manners

[122] As the Roman law subsisted for many ages, the *Cognati*, or relations on the mother's side, were not called to the succession. This harsh institution was gradually undermined by humanity, and finally abolished by Justinian.

[123] Plin. Panegyric. c. 37. [The tax was known as *vicesima hereditatium*,=5 per cent.]

[124] See Heineccius in the Antiquit. Juris Romani, l. ii.

[125] Horat. l. ii. Sat. v. Petron. c. 116, &c. Plin. l. ii. Epist. 20.

[126] Cicero in Philipp. ii. c. 16.

[127] See his epistles. Every such Will gave him an occasion of displaying his reverence to the dead, and his justice to the living. He reconciled both, in his behaviour to a son who had been disinherited by his mother (v. 1).

Regulations of the emperors

In the first and golden years of the reign of Nero, that prince, from a desire of popularity, and perhaps from a blind impulse of benevolence, conceived a wish of abolishing the oppression of the customs and excise. The wisest senators applauded his magnanimity: but they diverted him from the execution of a design which would have dissolved the strength and resources of the republic.[128] Had it indeed been possible to realize this dream of fancy, such princes as Trajan and the Antonines would surely have embraced with ardour the glorious opportunity of conferring so signal an obligation on mankind. Satisfied, however, with alleviating the public burden, they attempted not to remove it. The mildness and precision of their laws ascertained the rule and measure of taxation, and protected the subject of every rank against arbitrary interpretations, antiquated claims, and the insolent vexation of the farmers of the revenue.[129] For it is somewhat singular that, in every age, the best and wisest of the Roman governors persevered in this pernicious method of collecting the principal branches at least of the excise and customs.[130]

Edict of Caracalla

The sentiments, and indeed the situation, of Caracalla were very different from those of the Antonines. Inattentive, or rather averse, to the welfare of his people, he found himself under the necessity of gratifying the insatiate avarice which he had excited in the army. Of the several impositions introduced by Augustus, the twentieth on inheritances and legacies was the most fruitful as well as the most comprehensive. As its influence was not confined to Rome or Italy, the produce continually increased with the gradual extension of the Roman City. The new citizens, though charged on equal terms[131] with the payment of new taxes which had not affected them as subjects, derived an ample compensation from the rank they obtained, the privileges they acquired, and the fair prospect of honours and fortune that was thrown open to their ambition. But the favour which implied a distinction was lost in the prodigality of Caracalla, and the reluctant provincials were compelled to assume the vain title and the real obligations of Roman citizens. Nor was the rapacious son of Severus contented with such a

The freedom of the city given to all the provincials for the purpose of taxation

[128] Tacit. Annal. xiii. 50. Esprit des Loix, l. xii. c. 19.

[129] See Pliny's Panegyric, the Augustan History, and Burman. de Vectigal. passim.

[130] The tributes (properly so called) were not farmed; since the good princes often remitted many millions of arrears.

[131] The situation of the new citizens is minutely described by Pliny (Panegyric. c. 37, 38, 39). Trajan published a law very much in their favour.

measure of taxation as had appeared sufficient to his moderate predecessors. Instead of a twentieth, he exacted a tenth of all legacies and inheritances; and during his reign (for the ancient proportion was restored after his death) he crushed alike every part of the empire under the weight of his iron sceptre.[132]

Temporary reduction of the tribute

When all the provincials became liable to the peculiar impositions of Roman citizens, they seemed to acquire a legal exemption from the tributes which they had paid in their former condition of subjects. Such were not the maxims of government adopted by Caracalla and his pretended son. The old as well as the new taxes were, at the same time, levied in the provinces. It was reserved for the virtue of Alexander to relieve them in a great measure from this intolerable grievance, by reducing the tributes to a thirtieth part of the sum exacted at the time of his accession.[133] It is impossible to conjecture the motive that engaged him to spare so trifling a remnant of the public evil; but the noxious weed, which had not been totally eradicated, again sprang up with the most luxuriant growth, and in the succeeding age darkened the Roman world with its deadly shade. In the course of this history, we shall be too often summoned to explain the land-tax, the capitation, and the heavy contributions of corn, wine, oil, and meat, which were exacted from the provinces for the use of the court, the army, and the capital.

Consequences of the universal freedom of Rome

As long as Rome and Italy were respected as the centre of government, a national spirit was preserved by the ancient, and insensibly imbibed by the adopted, citizens. The principal commands of the army were filled by men who had received a liberal education, were well instructed in the advantages of laws and letters, and who had risen by equal steps through the regular succession of civil and military honours.[134] To their influence and example we may partly ascribe the modest obedience of the legions during the two first centuries of the Imperial history.

But when the last enclosure of the Roman constitution was trampled down by Caracalla, the separation of possessions gradually succeeded to the distinction of ranks. The more polished citizens of the internal provinces were alone qualified to act as

[132] Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1295 [9]. [The tax was reduced again to 5 per cent. by Macrinus. By the sixth century it had altogether disappeared.]

[133] He who paid ten *aurei*, the usual tribute, was charged with no more than the third part of an aureus, and proportional pieces of gold were coined by Alexander's order. Hist. August. p. 127 [xviii. 39], with the commentary of Salmasius.

[134] See the lives of Agricola, Vespasian, Trajan, Severus, and his three competitors; and indeed of all the eminent men of those times.

lawyers and magistrates. The rougher trade of arms was abandoned to the peasants and barbarians of the frontiers, who knew no country but their camp, no science but that of war, no civil laws, and scarcely those of military discipline. With bloody hands, savage manners, and desperate resolutions, they sometimes guarded, but much oftener subverted, the throne of the emperors.

CHAPTER VII

The elevation, and tyranny, of Maximin—Rebellion in Africa and Italy, under the authority of the Senate—Civil Wars and Seditions—Violent Deaths of Maximin and his Son, of Maximus and Balbinus, and of the three Gordians—Usurpation and Secular Games of Philip

The apparent ridicule,

Of the various forms of government which have prevailed in the world, an hereditary monarchy seems to present the fairest scope for ridicule. Is it possible to relate without an indignant smile, that, on the father's decease, the property of a nation, like that of a drove of oxen, descends to his infant son, as yet unknown to mankind and to himself, and that the bravest warriors and the wisest statesmen, relinquishing their natural right to empire, approach the royal cradle with bended knees and protestations of inviolable fidelity? Satire and declamation may paint these obvious topics in the most dazzling colours, but our more serious thoughts will respect a useful prejudice, that establishes a rule of succession, independent of the passions of mankind; and we shall cheerfully acquiesce in any expedient which deprives the multitude of the dangerous, and indeed the ideal, power of giving themselves a master.

and solid advantages of hereditary succession

In the cool shade of retirement, we may easily devise imaginary forms of government, in which the sceptre shall be constantly bestowed on the most worthy by the free and incorrupt suffrage of the whole community. Experience overturns these airy fabrics, and teaches us that in a large society the election of a monarch can never devolve to the wisest or to the most numerous part of the people. The army is the only order of men sufficiently united to concur in the same sentiments, and powerful enough to impose them on the rest of their fellow-citizens; but the temper of soldiers, habituated at once to violence and to slavery, renders them very unfit guardians of a legal or even a civil constitution. Justice, humanity, or political wisdom, are qualities they are too little acquainted with in themselves to appreciate them in others. Valour will acquire

their esteem, and liberality will purchase their suffrage; but the first of these merits is often lodged in the most savage breasts; the latter can only exert itself at the expense of the public; and both may be turned against the possessor of the throne by the ambition of a daring rival.

Want of it in the Roman empire productive of the greatest calamities

The superior prerogative of birth, when it has obtained the sanction of time and popular opinion, is the plainest and least invidious of all distinctions among mankind. The acknowledged right extinguishes the hopes of faction, and the conscious security disarms the cruelty of the monarch. To the firm establishment of this idea we owe the peaceful succession and mild administration of European monarchies. To the defect of it we must attribute the frequent civil wars, through which an Asiatic despot is obliged to cut his way to the throne of his fathers. Yet, even in the East, the sphere of contention is usually limited to the princes of the reigning house, and, as soon as the more fortunate competitor has removed his brethren, by the sword and the bow-string, he no longer entertains any jealousy of his meaner subjects. But the Roman empire, after the authority of the senate had sunk into contempt, was a vast scene of confusion. The royal, and even noble, families of the provinces had long since been led in triumph before the car of the haughty republicans. The ancient families of Rome had successively fallen beneath the tyranny of the Cæsars; and, whilst those princes were shackled by the forms of a commonwealth, and disappointed by the repeated failure of their posterity,[1] it was impossible that any idea of hereditary succession should have taken root in the minds of their subjects. The right to the throne, which none could claim from birth, every one assumed from merit. The daring hopes of ambition were set loose from the salutary restraints of law and prejudice, and the meanest of mankind might, without folly, entertain a hope of being raised by valour and fortune to a rank in the army, in which a single crime would enable him to wrest the sceptre of the world from his feeble and unpopular master. After the murder of Alexander Severus and the elevation of Maximin, no emperor could think himself safe upon the throne, and every barbarian peasant of the frontier might aspire to that august but dangerous station.

[1] There had been no example of three successive generations on the throne; only three instances of sons who succeeded their fathers. The marriages of Cæsars (notwithstanding the permission, and the frequent practice, of divorces) were generally unfruitful.

Birth and fortunes of Maximin

About thirty-two years before that event, the emperor Severus, returning from an Eastern expedition, halted in Thrace, to celebrate, with military games, the birthday of his younger son, Geta. The country flocked in crowds to behold their sovereign, and a young barbarian of gigantic stature earnestly solicited, in his rude dialect, that he might be allowed to contend for the prize of wrestling. As the pride of discipline would have been disgraced in the overthrow of a Roman soldier by a Thracian peasant, he was matched with the stoutest followers of the camp, sixteen of whom he successively laid on the ground. His victory was rewarded by some trifling gifts, and a permission to enlist in the troops. The next day the happy barbarian was distinguished above a crowd of recruits, dancing and exulting after the fashion of his country. As soon as he perceived that he had attracted the emperor's notice, he instantly ran up to his horse, and followed him on foot, without the least appearance of fatigue, in a long and rapid career. "Thracian," said Severus, with astonishment, "art thou disposed to wrestle after thy race?" "Most willingly, Sir," replied the unwearied youth, and, almost in a breath, overthrew seven of the strongest soldiers in the army. A gold collar was the prize of his matchless vigour and activity, and he was immediately appointed to serve in the horse-guards who always attended on the person of the sovereign.[2]

His military service and honours

Maximin, for that was his name, though born on the territories of the empire, descended from a mixed race of barbarians. His father was a Goth, and his mother of the nation of the Alani.[3] He displayed on every occasion a valour equal to his strength; and his native fierceness was soon tempered or disguised by the knowledge of the world. Under the reign of Severus and his son, he obtained the rank of centurion, with the favour and esteem of both those princes, the former of whom was an excellent judge of merit. Gratitude forbade Maximin to serve under the assassin of Caracalla. Honour taught him to decline the effeminate insults of Elagabalus. On the accession of Alexander he returned to court, and was placed by that prince in a station useful to the service and honourable to himself. The fourth legion, to which he was appointed tribune, soon became, under his care, the best disciplined of the whole army. With the general applause of the soldiers, who bestowed on their favourite hero the names of Ajax and Hercules, he was

[2] Hist. August. p. 138 [xix. 1].

[3] [His father's name was Micca, his mother's Hababa.]

successively promoted to the first military command,[4] and had not he still retained too much of his savage origin, the emperor might perhaps have given his own sister in marriage to the son of Maximin.[5]

Conspiracy of Maximin

Instead of securing his fidelity, these favours served only to inflame the ambition of the Thracian peasant, who deemed his fortune inadequate to his merit as long as he was constrained to acknowledge a superior. Though a stranger to real wisdom, he was not devoid of a selfish cunning, which showed him that the emperor had lost the affection of the army, and taught him to improve their discontent to his own advantage. It is easy for faction and calumny to shed their poison on the administration of the best of princes, and to accuse even their virtues by artfully confounding them with those vices to which they bear the nearest affinity. The troops listened with pleasure to the emissaries of Maximin. They blushed at their own ignominious patience, which, during thirteen years, had supported the vexatious discipline imposed by an effeminate Syrian, the timid slave of his mother and of the senate. It was time, they cried, to cast away that useless phantom of the civil power, and to elect for their prince and general a real soldier, educated in camps, exercised in war, who would assert the glory and distribute among his companions the treasures of the empire. A great army was at that time assembled on the banks of the Rhine, under the command of the emperor himself, who, almost immediately after his return from the Persian war, had been obliged to march against the barbarians of Germany. The important care of training and reviewing the new levies was intrusted to Maximin. One day, as he entered the field of exercise, the troops either from a sudden impulse or a formed conspiracy, saluted him emperor, silenced by their loud acclamations his obstinate refusal, and hastened to consummate their rebellion by the murder of Alexander Severus.

A.D. 235, March 19, Murder of Alexander Severus

The circumstances of his death are variously related. The writers who suppose that he died in ignorance of the ingratitude and ambition of Maximin affirm that, after taking a frugal repast in the sight of the army, he retired to sleep, and that about the seventh hour of the day a party of his own guards broke

[4] Hist. August. p. 140 [xix. 6]. Herodian, l. vi. p. 223 [8]. Aurelius Victor. By comparing these authors, it should seem, that Maximin had the particular command of the Triballian horse, with the general commission of disciplining the recruits of the whole army. His Biographer ought to have marked, with more care, his exploits, and the successive steps of his military promotions.

[5] See the original letter of Alexander Severus, Hist. August. p. 149 [xix. 29].

into the Imperial tent, and, with many wounds, assassinated their virtuous and unsuspecting prince.[6] If we credit another, and indeed a more probable, account, Maximin was invested with the purple by a numerous detachment, at the distance of several miles from the head quarters, and he trusted for success rather to the secret wishes than to the public declarations of the great army. Alexander had sufficient time to awaken a faint sense of loyalty among his troops; but their reluctant professions of fidelity quickly vanished on the appearance of Maximin, who declared himself the friend and advocate of the military order, and was unanimously acknowledged emperor of the Romans by the applauding legions. The son of Mamæa, betrayed and deserted, withdrew into his tent, desirous at least to conceal his approaching fate from the insults of the multitude. He was soon followed by a tribune and some centurions, the ministers of death; but instead of receiving with manly resolution the inevitable stroke, his unavailing cries and entreaties disgraced the last moments of his life, and converted into contempt some portion of the just pity which his innocence and misfortunes must inspire. His mother, Mamæa, whose pride and avarice he loudly accused as the cause of his ruin, perished with her son. The most faithful of his friends were sacrificed to the first fury of the soldiers. Others were reserved for the more deliberate cruelty of the usurper, and those who experienced mildest treatment were stripped of their employments and ignominiously driven from the court and army.[7]

Tyranny of Maximin

The former tyrants Caligula and Nero, Commodus and Caracalla, were all dissolute and unexperienced youths,[8] educated in the purple, and corrupted by the pride of empire, the luxury

[6] Hist. August. p. 135 [xviii. 61]. I have softened some of the most improbable circumstances of this wretched biographer. From this ill-worded narration, it should seem that, the prince's buffoon having accidently entered the tent, and awakened the slumbering monarch, the fear of punishment urged him to persuade the disaffected soldiers to commit the murder. [The place of the event was doubtless Mainz or its neighbourhood (so the Chronicle of Jerome, based on the Canon of Eusebius), but Lampridius, Hist. Aug. xviii. 59, and Aurelius Victor, Cæsar. xxiv. 4, strangely place the assassination at Sicilia in Britain. I do not profess to understand either Britain or Sicilia. Schiller guesses a confusion with *Vicus Britannicus*, Bretzenheim near Mainz.]

[7] Herodian, l. vi. p. 223-227 [8 and 9. The date of Alexander's death is March (18, or 19 according to Borghesi) 235. Maximin was acknowledged by the Senate on the 25th. J. Löhrer (de C. Julio Vero Maximino, 1883) has sought to fix the date as Feb. 10.]

[8] Caligula, the eldest of the four, was only twenty-five years of age when he ascended the throne; Caracalla was twenty-three, Commodus nineteen, and Nero no more than seventeen.

of Rome, and the perfidious voice of flattery. The cruelty of Maximin[9] was derived from a different source, the fear of contempt. Though he depended on the attachment of the soldiers, who loved him for virtues like their own, he was conscious that his mean and barbarian origin, his savage appearance, and his total ignorance of the arts and institutions of civil life,[10] formed a very unfavourable contrast with the amiable manners of the unhappy Alexander. He remembered that, in his humbler fortune, he had often waited before the doors of the haughty nobles of Rome, and had been denied admittance by the insolence of their slaves. He recollected too the friendship of a few who had relieved his poverty, and assisted his rising hopes. But those who had spurned, and those who had protected, the Thracian, were guilty of the same crime, the knowledge of his original obscurity. For this crime many were put to death; and by the execution of several of his benefactors Maximin published, in characters of blood, the indelible history of his baseness and ingratitude.[11]

The dark and sanguinary soul of the tyrant was open to every suspicion against those among his subjects who were the most distinguished by their birth or merit. Whenever he was alarmed with the sound of treason, his cruelty was unbounded and unrelenting. A conspiracy against his life was either discovered or imagined, and Magnus, a consular senator, was named as the principal author of it. Without a witness, without a trial, and without an opportunity of defence, Magnus, with four thousand of his supposed accomplices, were put to death. Italy and the whole empire were infested with innumerable spies and informers. On the slightest accusation, the first of the Roman

[9] [His imperial name is C. Julius Verus Maximinus.]

[10] It appears that he was totally ignorant of the Greek language; which, from its universal use in conversation and letters, was an essential part of every liberal education. [His Latin was very imperfect.]

[11] Hist. August. p. 141 [xix. 8]. Herodian, l. vii. p. 237 [1]. The latter of these historians has been most unjustly censured for sparing the vices of Maximin. [Gibbon is unfair to Maximin (though afterwards indeed, p. 183, in the name of "the candid severity of history," he partially retracts his harsh judgment). Maximin was a rude soldier, but he was thoroughly well meaning and capable. He was equal to the emergencies of the empire, and able to cope with the dangers on the Rhine and the Danube, with which Alexander had not the strength to deal. Like Septimius Severus, he had no sympathy with the senate, with Italy, or with the populace of Rome. For him the army was the *populus Romanus*. The intense hatred, however, which the senate conceived for him was chiefly due to the somewhat tyrannical rule of his prætorian præfect, Vitalian, who governed at Rome while the emperor defended the frontiers. Numerous inscriptions testify to Maximin's activity in every province in repairing and extending roads.]

nobles, who had governed provinces, commanded armies, and been adorned with the consular and triumphal ornaments, were chained on the public carriages, and hurried away to the emperor's presence. Confiscation, exile, or simple death, were esteemed uncommon instances of his lenity. Some of the unfortunate sufferers he ordered to be sewed up in the hides of slaughtered animals, others to be exposed to wild beasts, others again to be beaten to death with clubs. During the three years of his reign he disdained to visit either Rome or Italy. His camp, occasionally removed from the banks of the Rhine to those of the Danube, was the seat of his stern despotism, which trampled on every principle of law and justice, and was supported by the avowed power of the sword.[12] No man of noble birth, elegant accomplishments, or knowledge of civil business, was suffered near his person; and the court of a Roman emperor revived the idea of those ancient chiefs of slaves and gladiators, whose savage power had left a deep impression of terror and detestation.[13]

Oppression of the provinces

As long as the cruelty of Maximin was confined to the illustrious senators, or even to the bold adventurers who in the court or army expose themselves to the caprice of fortune, the body of the people viewed their sufferings with indifference, or perhaps with pleasure. But the tyrant's avarice, stimulated by the insatiate desires of the soldiers, at length attacked the public property.[14] Every city of the empire was possessed of an independent revenue, destined to purchase corn for the multitude, and to supply the expenses of the games and entertainments. By a single act of authority, the whole mass of wealth was at once confiscated for the use of the Imperial treasury. The temples were stripped of their most valuable offerings of gold and silver, and the statues of gods, heroes, and emperors, were melted down and coined into money. These impious orders

[12] The wife of Maximin, by insinuating wise counsels with female gentleness, sometimes brought back the tyrant to the way of truth and humanity. See Ammianus Marcellinus, xiv. 1 [8], where he alludes to the fact which he had more fully related under the reign of the Gordians. We may collect from the medals, that Paullina was the name of this benevolent empress; and from the title of *Diva*, that she died before Maximin. (Valesius ad loc. cit. Ammian.) Spanheim de U. et P. N. tom. ii. p. 300.

[13] He was compared to Spartacus and Athenio. Hist. August. p. 141 [xix. 9].

[14] [This is put rather unfairly. Money was wanted for the military operations on the frontiers; and one can feel little indignation that the amusements of the populace should have been postponed for the defence of the empire. Gibbon hardly seems to realize that Maximin's warfare was serious, and that his organization of the frontier defences was of capital importance.]

could not be executed without tumults and massacres, as in many places the people chose rather to die in the defence of their altars than to behold in the midst of peace their cities exposed to the rapine and cruelty of war. The soldiers themselves, among whom this sacrilegious plunder was distributed, received it with a blush ; and, hardened as they were in acts of violence, they dreaded the just reproaches of their friends and relations. Throughout the Roman world a general cry of indignation was heard, imploring vengeance on the common enemy of human kind ; and at length, by an act of private oppression, a peaceful and unarmed province was driven into rebellion against him.[15]

Revolt in Africa, A.D. 237, April

The procurator of Africa was a servant worthy of such a master, who considered the fines and confiscations of the rich as one of the most fruitful branches of the Imperial revenue. An iniquitous sentence had been pronounced against some opulent youths of that country, the execution of which would have stripped them of far the greater part of their patrimony. In this extremity, a resolution that must either complete or prevent their ruin was dictated by despair. A respite of three days, obtained with difficulty from the rapacious treasurer, was employed in collecting from their estates a great number of slaves and peasants blindly devoted to the commands of their lords, and armed with the rustic weapons of clubs and axes. The leaders of the conspiracy, as they were admitted to the audience of the procurator, stabbed him with the daggers concealed under their garments, and, by the assistance of their tumultuary train, seized on the little town of Thysdrus,[16] and erected the standard of rebellion against the sovereign of the Roman empire. They rested their hopes on the hatred of mankind against Maximin, and they judiciously resolved to oppose to that detested tyrant an emperor whose mild virtues had already acquired the love and esteem of the Romans, and whose authority over the province would give weight and stability to the enterprise. Gordianus,[17] their proconsul, and the object of their choice, refused, with unfeigned reluctance, the dangerous

[15] Herodian, l. vii. p. 238 [3]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 15 [13].

[16] In the fertile territory of Byzacium, one hundred and fifty miles to the south of Carthage. This city was decorated, probably by the Gordians, with the title of colony, and with a fine amphitheatre, which is still in a very perfect state. See Itinerar. Wesseling, p. 59, and Shaw's Travels, p. 117. [Thysdrus is now El-Djemm. This revolt took place in spring 238. Eckhel, vii. 293. The chronology of the events of this year is hopelessly perplexing and uncertain. See App. 12.]

[17] [M. Antonius Gordianus.]

honour, and begged with tears that they should suffer him to terminate in peace a long and innocent life, without staining his feeble age with civil blood. Their menaces compelled him to accept the Imperial purple, his only refuge indeed against the jealous cruelty of Maximin; since, according to the reasoning of tyrants, those who have been esteemed worthy of the throne deserve death, and those who deliberate have already rebelled.[18]

Character and elevation of the two Gordians

The family of Gordianus was one of the most illustrious of the Roman senate. On the father's side he was descended from the Gracchi; on his mother's, from the emperor Trajan. A great estate enabled him to support the dignity of his birth, and in the enjoyment of it he displayed an elegant taste and beneficent disposition. The palace in Rome formerly inhabited by the great Pompey had been, during several generations, in the possession of Gordian's family.[19] It was distinguished by ancient trophies of naval victories, and decorated with the works of modern painting. His villa on the road to Præneste was celebrated for baths of singular beauty and extent, for three stately rooms of an hundred feet in length, and for a magnificent portico, supported by two hundred columns of the four most curious and costly sorts of marble.[20] The public shows exhibited at his expense, and in which the people were entertained with many hundreds of wild beasts and gladiators,[21] seem to surpass the fortune of a subject; and, whilst the liberality of other magistrates was confined to a few solemn festivals in Rome, the magnificence of Gordian was repeated, when he was ædile, every month in the year, and extended, during his consulship, to the principal cities of Italy. He was twice elevated to

[18] Herodian, l. vii. p. 239 [4]. Hist. August. p. 153 [xx. 7].

[19] Hist. August. p. 152 [xx. 3]. The celebrated house of Pompey *in carinis*, was usurped by Marc Antony, and consequently became, after the Triumvir's death, a part of the Imperial domain. The emperor Trajan allowed and even encouraged the rich senators to purchase those magnificent and useless palaces (Plin. Panegyric. c. 50); and it may seem probable, that on this occasion, Pompey's house came into the possession of Gordian's great-grandfather.

[20] The Claudian, the Numidian, the Carystian, and the Synnadian. The colours of Roman marbles have been faintly described and imperfectly distinguished. It appears, however, that the Carystian was a sea green, and that the marble of Synnada was white mixed with oval spots of purple [rose-red]. See Salmasius ad Hist. August. p. 164 [xx. 30]. [The Numidian was a yellow crocus.]

[21] Hist. August. p. 151, 152 [xx. 3 and 4]. He sometimes gave five hundred pair of Gladiators, never less than one hundred and fifty. He once gave for the use of the Circus one hundred Sicilian, and as many Cappadocian horses. The animals designed for hunting were chiefly bears, boars, bulls, stags, elks, wild asses, &c. Elephants and lions seem to have been appropriated to Imperial magnificence.

the last-mentioned dignity, by Caracalla and by Alexander; for he possessed the uncommon talent of acquiring the esteem of virtuous princes, without alarming the jealousy of tyrants. His long life was innocently spent in the study of letters and the peaceful honours of Rome; and, till he was named proconsul of Africa by the voice of the senate and the approbation of Alexander,[22] he appears prudently to have declined the command of armies and the government of provinces. As long as that emperor lived, Africa was happy under the administration of his worthy representative; after the barbarous Maximin had usurped the throne, Gordianus alleviated the miseries which he was unable to prevent. When he reluctantly accepted the purple, he was above fourscore years old; a last and valuable remains of the happy age of the Antonines, whose virtues he revived in his own conduct, and celebrated in an elegant poem of thirty books. With the venerable proconsul, his son, who had accompanied him into Africa as his lieutenant, was likewise declared emperor. His manners were less pure, but his character was equally amiable with that of his father. Twenty-two acknowledged concubines, and a library of sixty-two thousand volumes, attested the variety of his inclinations; and from the productions which he left behind him, it appears that both the one and the other were designed for use rather than for ostentation.[23] The Roman people acknowledged in the features of the younger Gordian the resemblance of Scipio Africanus, recollected with pleasure that his mother was the grand-daughter of Antoninus Pius, and rested the public hope on those latent virtues which had hitherto, as they fondly imagined, lain concealed in the luxurious indolence of a private life.

They solicit the confirmation of their authority

As soon as the Gordians had appeased the first tumult of a popular election they removed their court to Carthage. They were received with the acclamations of the Africans, who honoured their virtues, and who, since the visit of Hadrian, had never beheld the majesty of a Roman emperor. But these vain acclamations neither strengthened nor confirmed the title of the Gordians. They were induced by principle, as well as interest, to solicit the approbation of the senate; and a deputation of the

[22] See the original letter, in the Augustan History, p. 152 [xx. 5], which at once shows Alexander's respect for the authority of the senate, and his esteem for the proconsul appointed by that assembly.

[23] By each of his concubines, the younger Gordian left three or four children. His literary productions, though less numerous, were by no means contemptible.

noblest provincials was sent, without delay, to Rome, to relate and justify the conduct of their countrymen, who, having long suffered with patience, were at length resolved to act with vigour. The letters of the new princes were modest and respectful, excusing the necessity which had obliged them to accept the Imperial title, but submitting their election and their fate to the supreme judgment of the senate.[24]

The senate ratifies their election of the Gordians

The inclinations of the senate were neither doubtful nor divided. The birth and noble alliances of the Gordians had intimately connected them with the most illustrious houses of Rome. Their fortune had created many dependants in that assembly, their merit had acquired many friends. Their mild administration opened the flattering prospect of the restoration, not only of the civil but even of the republican government. The terror of military violence, which had first obliged the senate to forget the murder of Alexander, and to ratify the election of a barbarian peasant,[25] now produced a contrary effect, and provoked them to assert the injured rights of freedom and humanity. The hatred of Maximin towards the senate was declared and implacable; the tamest submission had not appeased his fury, the most cautious innocence would not remove his suspicions; and even the care of their own safety urged them to share the fortune of an enterprise, of which (if unsuccessful) they were sure to be the first victims. These considerations, and perhaps others of a more private nature, were debated in a previous conference of the consuls and the magistrates. As soon as their resolution was decided, they convoked in the temple of Castor the whole body of the senate, according to an ancient form of secrecy,[26] calculated to awaken their attention and to conceal their decrees. "Conscript fathers," said the consul Syllanus, "the two Gordians, both of consular dignity, the one your proconsul, and the other your lieutenant, have been declared emperors by the general consent of Africa. Let us return thanks," he boldly continued, "to the youth of Thysdrus; let us return thanks to the faithful people of Carthage, our generous deliverers from a horrid monster.—Why do you hear me thus coolly, thus timidly? Why do you cast these anxious looks on

[24] Herodian, l. vii. p. 243 [6]. Hist. August. p. 144 [xix. 14].

[25] Quod tamen patres, dum periculosum existimant inermes armato resistere, approbaverunt. *Aurelius Victor* [Cæsar. 25].

[26] Even the servants of the house, the scribes, &c., were excluded, and their office was filled by the senators themselves. We are obliged to the Augustan History, p. 157 [xx. 12], for preserving this curious example of the old discipline of the commonwealth.

each other? why hesitate? Maximin is a public enemy! may his enmity soon expire with him,[27] and may we long enjoy the prudence and felicity of Gordian the father, the valour and constancy of Gordian the son!" [28] The noble ardour of the consul revived the languid spirit of the senate. By an unanimous decree the election of the Gordians was ratified; Maximin, his son, and his adherents were pronounced enemies of their country, and liberal rewards were offered to whomsoever had the courage and good fortune to destroy them.

and declares Maximin a public enemy

Assumes the command of Rome and Italy

During the emperor's absence a detachment of the Prætorian guards remained at Rome, to protect, or rather to command, the capital. The præfect Vitalianus had signalized his fidelity to Maximin by the alacrity with which he had obeyed, and even prevented, the cruel mandates of the tyrant. His death alone could rescue the authority of the senate, and the lives of the senators, from a state of danger and suspense. Before their resolves had transpired, a quæstor and some tribunes were commissioned to take his devoted life. They executed the order with equal boldness and success; and, with their bloody daggers in their hands, ran through the streets, proclaiming to the people and the soldiers the news of the happy revolution. The enthusiasm of liberty was seconded by the promise of a large donative in lands and money; the statues of Maximin were thrown down; the capital of the empire acknowledged, with transport, the authority of the two Gordians and the senate; [29] and the example of Rome was followed by the rest of Italy.

and prepares for a civil war

A new spirit had arisen in that assembly, whose long patience had been insulted by wanton despotism and military licence. The senate assumed the reins of government, and, with a calm intrepidity, prepared to vindicate by arms the cause of freedom. Among the consular senators recommended by their merit and services to the favour of the emperor Alexander, it was easy to select twenty, not unequal to the command of an army and the conduct of a war.[30] To these was the defence of Italy intrusted. Each was appointed to act in his respective department, authorized to enrol and discipline the Italian youth, and instructed to fortify the ports and highways against the impending

[27] [The Latin text has a confident future; *di facient ut esse iam desinat.* Gibbon renders it as if it were *faciant.*]

[28] This spirited speech, translated from the Augustan historian, p. 156 [xx. 11], seems transcribed by him from the original registers of the senate.

[29] Herodian, l. vii. p. 244 [6].

[30] [Compare Herodian, viii. 5, 5, with Zosimus, i. 14, and Hist. Aug. xxi. 10.]

invasion of Maximin. A number of deputies, chosen from the most illustrious of the senatorian and equestrian orders, were despatched at the same time to the governors of the several provinces, earnestly conjuring them to fly to the assistance of their country, and to remind the nations of their ancient ties of friendship with the Roman senate and people. The general respect with which these deputies were received, and the zeal of Italy and the provinces in favour of the senate, sufficiently prove that the subjects of Maximin were reduced to that uncommon distress, in which the body of the people has more to fear from oppression than from resistance. The consciousness of that melancholy truth inspires a degree of persevering fury seldom to be found in those civil wars which are artificially supported for the benefit of a few factious and designing leaders.[31]

Defeat and death of the two Gordians A.D. 237, 3rd July [238, April]

For, while the cause of the Gordians was embraced with such diffusive ardour, the Gordians themselves were no more. The feeble court of Carthage was alarmed with the rapid approach of Capelianus, governor of Mauritania,[32] who, with a small band of veterans[33] and a fierce host of barbarians, attacked a faithful but unwarlike province. The younger Gordian sallied out to meet the enemy at the head of a few guards, and a numerous undisciplined multitude, educated in the peaceful luxury of Carthage. His useless valour served only to procure him an honourable death in the field of battle. His aged father, whose reign had not exceeded thirty-six days, put an end to his life on the first news of the defeat. Carthage, destitute of defence, opened her gates to the conqueror, and Africa was exposed to the rapacious cruelty of a slave, obliged to satisfy his unrelenting master with a large account of blood and treasure.[34]

[31] Herodian, l. vii. p. 247 [7], l. viii. p. 277 [6]. Hist. August. p. 156-158 [xx. 13 *sqq.*]. [See Corp. Insc. Lat. iii. 1422, 1423, 1456.]

[32] [Not of Mauritania, but of Numidia. See C. I. L. viii. 2170.]

[33] [The legion iii. Augusta.]

[34] Herodian, l. vii. p. 254 [9]. Hist. August. p. 158-160 [xx. 15 *sqq.*]. We may observe that one month and six days for the reign of Gordian is a just correction of Casaubon and Panvinius, instead of the absurd reading of one year and six months. See Commentar. p. 193. Zosimus relates, l. i. p. 17 [16], that the two Gordians perished by a tempest in the midst of their navigation. A strange ignorance of history, or a strange abuse of metaphors! [The date of the death of the Gordians is now known to be 238, but the month is uncertain. See Appendix 12. The meeting of the senate is stated to have taken place on the 9th June or July (see next note). It is clear that this meeting followed quickly on the news from Africa; the words of Capitolinus are—*senatus* praetrepidus *in aedem Concordiae concurrit.* Thus the view of Eckhel and Clinton that the Gordians fell in April, or March, 238, implies the rejection of this date.]

Election of Maximus and Balbinus by the senate, 9th July

The fate of the Gordians filled Rome with just, but unexpected, terror. The senate, convoked in the temple of Concord, affected to transact the common business of the day; and seemed to decline, with trembling anxiety, the consideration of their own, and the public, danger. A silent consternation prevailed on the assembly, till a senator, of the name and family of Trajan, awakened his brethren from their fatal lethargy. He represented to them that the choice of cautious dilatory measures had been long since out of their power; that Maximin, implacable by nature and exasperated by injuries, was advancing towards Italy, at the head of the military force of the empire; and that their only remaining alternative was either to meet him bravely in the field, or tamely to expect the tortures and ignominious death reserved for unsuccessful rebellion. "We have lost," continued he, "two excellent princes; but, unless we desert ourselves, the hopes of the republic have not perished with the Gordians. Many are the senators whose virtues have deserved, and whose abilities would sustain, the Imperial dignity. Let us elect two emperors, one of whom may conduct the war against the public enemy, whilst his colleague remains at Rome to direct the civil administration. I cheerfully expose myself to the danger and envy of the nomination, and give my vote in favour of Maximus and Balbinus. Ratify my choice, conscript fathers, or appoint, in their place, others more worthy of the empire." The general apprehension silenced the whispers of jealousy; the merit of the candidates was universally acknowledged; and the house resounded with the sincere acclamations of "Long life and victory to the Emperors Maximus and Balbinus. You are happy in the judgment of the senate; may the republic be happy under your administration!" [35]

Their characters

The virtues and the reputation of the new emperors justified the most sanguine hopes of the Romans. The various nature of their talents seemed to appropriate to each his peculiar department of peace and war, without leaving room for jealous emulation. Balbinus was an admired orator, a poet of distinguished fame, and a wise magistrate, who had exercised with innocence and applause the civil jurisdiction in almost all the interior provinces of the empire. His birth was noble,[36] his fortune

[35] See the Augustan History, p. 166 [xxi. 1], from the registers of the senate; the date is confessedly faulty, but the coincidence of the Apollinarian games enables us to correct it. [Iunias in Hist. Aug. xxi. 1, is supposed to be a mere slip of the pen for Iulias.]

[36] He was descended from Cornelius Balbus, a noble Spaniard, and the adopted son of Theophanes the Greek historian. Balbus obtained the freedom of Rome by

affluent, his manners liberal and affable. In him, the love of pleasure was corrected by a sense of dignity, nor had the habits of ease deprived him of a capacity for business. The mind of Maximus [37] was formed in a rougher mould. By his valour and abilities he had raised himself from the meanest origin to the first employments of the state and army. His victories over the Sarmatians and the Germans, the austerity of his life, and the rigid impartiality of his justice whilst he was præfect of the city, commanded the esteem of a people whose affections were engaged in favour of the more amiable Balbinus. The two colleagues had both been consul (Balbinus had twice enjoyed that honourable office), both had been named among the twenty lieutenants of the senate; and, since the one was sixty and the other seventy-four years old,[38] they had both attained the full maturity of age and experience.

Tumult at Rome. The younger Gordian is declared Cæsar

After the senate had conferred on Maximus and Balbinus an equal portion of the consular and tribunitian powers, the title of Fathers of their country, and the joint office of Supreme Pontiff, they ascended to the Capitol to return thanks to the gods, protectors of Rome.[39] The solemn rites of sacrifice were disturbed by a sedition of the people. The licentious multitude neither loved the rigid Maximus, nor did they sufficiently fear the mild and humane Balbinus. Their increasing numbers surrounded the temple of Jupiter; with obstinate clamours they asserted their inherent right of consenting to the election of their sovereign: and demanded, with an apparent moderation, that, besides the two emperors chosen by the senate, a third should be added of the family of the Gordians, as a just return of gratitude to those princes who had sacrificed their lives for the republic. At the head of the city guards and the youth of the

the favour of Pompey, and preserved it by the eloquence of Cicero (see Orat. pro Cornel. Balbo). The friendship of Cæsar (to whom he rendered the most important secret services in the civil war) raised him to the consulship and the pontificate, honours never yet possessed by a stranger. The nephew of this Balbus triumphed over the Garamantes. See Dictionnaire de Bayle, au mot *Balbus*, where he distinguishes the several persons of that name, and rectifies, with his usual accuracy, the mistakes of former writers concerning them. [The full name of Balbinus was D. Caelius Calvinus Balbinus.]

[37] [M. Clodius Pupienus Maximus (on coins Pupienus, in African inscriptions Pupienius).]

[38] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 622 [17]. But little dependence is to be had on the authority of a modern Greek, so grossly ignorant of the history of the third century that he creates several imaginary emperors, and confounds those who really existed.

[39] Herodian, l. vii. p. 256 [10], supposes that the senate was at first convoked in the Capitol, and is very eloquent on the occasion. The Augustan History, p. 166 [xxi. 3], seems much more authentic.

equestrian order, Maximus and Balbinus attempted to cut their way through the seditious multitude. The multitude, armed with sticks and stones, drove them back into the Capitol. It is prudent to yield, when the contest, whatever may be the issue of it, must be fatal to both parties. A boy, only thirteen years of age, the grandson of the elder and nephew of the younger Gordian, was produced to the people, invested with the ornaments and title of Cæsar.[40] The tumult was appeased by this easy condescension; and the two emperors, as soon as they had been peaceably acknowledged in Rome, prepared to defend Italy against the common enemy.

Maximin prepares to attack the senate and their emperors

Whilst in Rome and Africa revolutions succeeded each other with such amazing rapidity, the mind of Maximin was agitated by the most furious passions. He is said to have received the news of the rebellion of the Gordians, and of the decree of the senate against him, not with the temper of a man, but the rage of a wild beast; which, as it could not discharge itself on the distant senate, threatened the life of his son, of his friends, and of all who ventured to approach his person. The grateful intelligence of the death of the Gordians was quickly followed by the assurance that the senate, laying aside all hopes of pardon or accommodation, had substituted in their room two emperors, with whose merit he could not be unacquainted. Revenge was the only consolation left to Maximin, and revenge could only be obtained by arms. The strength of the legions had been assembled by Alexander from all parts of the empire. Three successful campaigns against the Germans and the Sarmatians[41] had raised their fame, confirmed their discipline, and even increased their numbers, by filling the ranks with the flower of the barbarian youth. The life of Maximin had been spent in war, and the candid severity of history cannot refuse him the valour of a soldier, or even the abilities of an experienced general.[42] It might naturally be expected that a prince of such a character, instead of suffering the rebellion to gain stability by delay, should immediately have marched from the banks of the

[40] [It is worthy of notice that he was not adopted as son by either of the Augusti, as was usual in such cases.]

[41] [On the Rhine against the Germans 235 and 236, on the Danube against Sarmatians and Dacians in 237. Hence the titles *Germanicus*, *Dacicus*, *Sarmaticus* which his son also bore.]

[42] In Herodian, l. vii. p. 249 [8], and in the Augustan History [xix. 18; xx. 14] we have three several orations of Maximin to his army, on the rebellion of Africa and Rome: M. de Tillemont has very justly observed, that they neither agree with each other, nor with truth. Histoire des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 799.

Danube to those of the Tiber, and that his victorious army, instigated by contempt for the senate, and eager to gather the spoils of Italy, should have burned with impatience to finish the easy and lucrative conquest. Yet, as far as we can trust to the obscure chronology of that period,[43] it appears that the operations of some foreign war deferred the Italian expedition till the ensuing spring. From the prudent conduct of Maximin, we may learn that the savage features of his character have been exaggerated by the pencil of party; that his passions, however impetuous, submitted to the force of reason; and that the barbarian possessed something of the generous spirit of Sylla, who subdued the enemies of Rome before he suffered himself to revenge his private injuries.[44]

When the troops of Maximin, advancing[45] in excellent order, arrived at the foot of the Julian Alps, they were terrified by the silence and desolation that reigned on the frontiers of Italy. The villages and open towns had been abandoned, on their approach, by the inhabitants, the cattle was driven away, the provisions removed or destroyed, the bridges broken down, nor was anything left which could afford either shelter or subsistence to an invader. Such had been the wise orders of the generals of the senate, whose design was to protract the war, to ruin the army of Maximin by the slow operation of famine, and to consume his strength in the sieges of the principal cities of Italy, which they had plentifully stored with men and provisions from the deserted country. Aquileia received and withstood the first shock of the invasion. The streams that issue from the head of the Hadriatic gulf, swelled by the melting of the winter snows,[46] opposed an unexpected obstacle to the arms

Marches into Italy, A.D. 238, February

Siege of Aquileia

[43] The carelessness of the writers of that age leaves us in a singular perplexity. 1. We know that Maximus and Balbinus were killed during the Capitoline games. Herodian, l. viii. p. 285 [8]. The authority of Censorinus (de Die Natali, c. 18) enables us to fix those games with certainty to the year 238, but leaves us in ignorance of the month or day. 2. The election of Gordian by the senate is fixed, with equal certainty, to the 27th of May; but we are at a loss to discover, whether it was in the same or the preceding year. Tillemont and Muratori, who maintain the two opposite opinions, bring into the field a desultory troop of authorities, conjectures and probabilities. The one seems to draw out, the other to contract, the series of events, between those periods, more than can be well reconciled to reason and history. Yet it is necessary to choose between them. [See further Appendix 12.]

[44] Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 24. The president de Montesquieu (in his dialogue between Sylla and Eucrates) expresses the sentiments of the dictator in a spirited and even sublime manner.

[45] [From Sirmium.]

[46] Muratori (Annali d'Italia, tom. ii. p. 294) thinks the melting of the snows suits better with the months of June or July, than with that of February. The

of Maximin. At length, on a singular bridge, constructed, with art and difficulty, of large hogsheads, he transported his army to the opposite bank, rooted up the beautiful vineyards in the neighbourhood of Aquileia, demolished the suburbs, and employed the timber of the buildings in the engines and towers with which on every side he attacked the city. The walls, fallen to decay during the security of a long peace, had been hastily repaired on this sudden emergency; but the firmest defence of Aquileia consisted in the constancy of the citizens; all ranks of whom, instead of being dismayed, were animated by the extreme danger, and their knowledge of the tyrant's unrelenting temper. Their courage was supported and directed by Crispinus and Menophilus, two of the twenty lieutenants of the senate, who, with a small body of regular troops, had thrown themselves into the besieged place. The army of Maximin was repulsed in repeated attacks, his machines destroyed by showers of artificial fire; and the generous enthusiasm of the Aquileians was exalted into a confidence of success, by the opinion that Belenus, their tutelar deity, combated in person in the defence of his distressed worshippers.[47]

Conduct of Maximus

The Emperor Maximus, who had advanced as far as Ravenna to secure that important place, and to hasten the military preparations, beheld the event of the war in the more faithful mirror of reason and policy. He was too sensible that a single town could not resist the persevering efforts of a great army; and he dreaded lest the enemy, tired with the obstinate resistance of Aquileia, should on a sudden relinquish the fruitless siege and march directly towards Rome. The fate of the empire and the cause of freedom must then be committed to the chance of a battle; and what arms could he oppose to the veteran legions of the Rhine and Danube? Some troops newly levied among the generous but enervated youth of Italy, and a body of

opinion of a man who passed his life between the Alps and the Apennines is undoubtedly of great weight; yet I observe, 1. That the long winter, of which Muratori takes advantage, is to be found only in the Latin version, and not in the Creek text, of Herodian. 2. That the vicissitude of suns and rains, to which the soldiers of Maximin were exposed (Herodian, l. viii. p. 277 [5]), denotes the spring rather than the summer. We may observe likewise, that these several streams, as they melted into one, composed the Timavus, so poetically (in every sense of the word) described by Virgil. They are about twelve miles to the east of Aquileia. See Cluver. Italia Antiqua, tom. i. p. 189, &c.

[47] Herodian, l. viii. p. 272 [3]. The Celtic deity was supposed to be Apollo, and received under that name the thanks of the senate. A temple was likewise built to Venus the Bald, in honour of the women of Aquileia, who had given up their hair to make ropes for the military engines.

German auxiliaries, on whose firmness, in the hour of trial, it was dangerous to depend. In the midst of these just alarms, the stroke of domestic conspiracy punished the crimes of Maximin and delivered Rome and the senate from the calamities that would surely have attended the victory of an enraged barbarian.

Murder of Maximin and his son, A.D. 238, April

The people of Aquileia had scarcely experienced any of the common miseries of a siege; their magazines were plentifully supplied, and several fountains within the walls assured them of an inexhaustible resource of fresh water. The soldiers of Maximin were, on the contrary, exposed to the inclemency of the season, the contagion of disease, and the horrors of famine. The naked country was ruined, the rivers filled with the slain and polluted with blood. A spirit of despair and disaffection began to diffuse itself among the troops; and, as they were cut off from all intelligence, they easily believed that the whole empire had embraced the cause of the senate, and that they were left as devoted victims to perish under the impregnable walls of Aquileia. The fierce temper of the tyrant was exasperated by disappointments, which he imputed to the cowardice of his army; and his wanton and ill-timed cruelty, instead of striking terror, inspired hatred and a just desire of revenge. A party of Prætorian guards, who trembled for their wives and children in the camp of Alba, near Rome, executed the sentence of the senate. Maximin, abandoned by his guards, was slain in his tent, with his son (whom he had associated to the honours of the purple), Anulinus the præfect, and the principal ministers of his tyranny.[48] The sight of their heads, borne on the point of spears, convinced the citizens of Aquileia that the siege was at an end; the gates of the city were thrown open, a liberal market was provided for the hungry troops of Maximin, and the whole army joined in solemn protestations of fidelity to the senate and people of Rome, and to their lawful emperors Maximus and Balbinus. Such was the deserved fate of a brutal savage, destitute, as he has generally been represented, of every sentiment that distinguishes a civilized, or even a human, being. The body was suited to the soul. The stature of Maximin exceeded the measure of eight feet, and circumstances almost

His portrait

[48] Herodian, l. viii. p. 279 [5]. Hist. August. p. 146 [xix. 23]. The duration of Maximin's reign has not been defined with much accuracy, except by Eutropius, who allows him three years and a few days (l. ix. 1); we may depend on the integrity of the text, as the Latin original is checked by the Greek version of Pæanius (see Appendix 1).

incredible are related of his matchless strength and appetite.[49] Had he lived in a less enlightened age, tradition and poetry might well have described him as one of those monstrous giants, whose supernatural power was constantly exerted for the destruction of mankind.

Joy of the Roman world

It is easier to conceive than to describe the universal joy of the Roman world on the fall of the tyrant, the news of which is said to have been carried in four days from Aquileia to Rome. The return of Maximus was a triumphal procession; his colleague and young Gordian went out to meet him, and the three princes made their entry into the capital, attended by the ambassadors of almost all the cities of Italy, saluted with the splendid offerings of gratitude and superstition, and received with the unfeigned acclamations of the senate and people, who persuaded themselves that a golden age would succeed to an age of iron.[50] The conduct of the two emperors corresponded with these expectations. They administered justice in person; and the rigour of the one was tempered by the other's clemency. The oppressive taxes with which Maximin had loaded the rights of inheritance and succession were repealed, or at least moderated. Discipline was revived, and with the advice of the senate many wise laws were enacted by their Imperial ministers, who endeavoured to restore a civil constitution on the ruins of military tyranny. "What reward may we expect for delivering Rome from a monster?" was the question asked by Maximus, in a moment of freedom and confidence. Balbinus answered it without hesitation, "The love of the senate, of the people, and of all mankind". "Alas!" replied his more penetrating colleague, "Alas! I dread the hatred of the soldiers, and the fatal effects of their resentment."[51] His apprehensions were but too well justified by the event.

Sedition at Rome

Whilst Maximus was preparing to defend Italy against the common foe, Balbinus, who remained at Rome, had been engaged in scenes of blood and intestine discord. Distrust and jealousy reigned in the senate; and even in the temples where they

[49] Eight Roman feet and one third, which are equal to above eight English feet, as the two measures are to each other in the proportion of 967 to 1000. See Graves's discourse on the Roman foot. We are told that Maximin could drink in a day an amphora (or about seven gallons) of wine and eat thirty or forty pounds of meat. He could move a loaded waggon, break a horse's leg with his fist, crumble stones in his hand, and tear up small trees by the roots. See his Life in the Augustan History.

[50] See the congratulatory letter of Claudius Julianus the consul, to the two emperors, in the Augustan History [xxi. 17].

[51] Hist. August. p. 171 [xxi. 15].

assembled every senator carried either open or concealed arms. In the midst of their deliberations, two veterans of the guards, actuated either by curiosity or a sinister motive, audaciously thrust themselves into the house, and advanced by degrees beyond the altar of Victory. Gallicanus, a consular, and Mæcenas, a prætorian senator, viewed with indignation their insolent intrusion: drawing their daggers, they laid the spies, for such they deemed them, dead at the foot of the altar, and then, advancing to the door of the senate, imprudently exhorted the multitude to massacre the Prætorians as the secret adherents of the tyrant. Those who escaped the first fury of the tumult took refuge in the camp, which they defended with superior advantage against the reiterated attacks of the people, assisted by the numerous bands of gladiators, the property of opulent nobles. The civil war lasted many days, with infinite loss and confusion on both sides. When the pipes were broken that supplied the camp with water, the Prætorians were reduced to intolerable distress; but, in their turn, they made desperate sallies into the city, set fire to a great number of houses, and filled the streets with the blood of the inhabitants. The emperor Balbinus attempted, by ineffectual edicts and precarious truces, to reconcile the factions of Rome. But their animosity, though smothered for a while, burnt with redoubled violence. The soldiers, detesting the senate and the people, despised the weakness of a prince who wanted either the spirit or the power to command the obedience of his subjects.[52]

Discontent of the Prætorian guards

After the tyrant's death his formidable army had acknowledged, from necessity rather than from choice, the authority of Maximus, who transported himself without delay to the camp before Aquileia. As soon as he had received their oath of fidelity he addressed them in terms full of mildness and moderation; lamented rather than arraigned the wild disorders of the times, and assured the soldiers that, of all their past conduct, the senate would remember only their generous desertion of the tyrant and their voluntary return to their duty. Maximus enforced his exhortations by a liberal donative, purified the camp by a solemn sacrifice of expiation, and then dismissed the legions to their several provinces, impressed, as he hoped, with a lively sense of gratitude and obedience.[53] But nothing could reconcile the haughty spirit of the Prætorians. They attended the emperors on the memorable day of their public entry into Rome:

[52] Herodian, l. viii. p. 258 [12]. [53] Herodian, l. viii. p. 213 [7].

but, amidst the general acclamations, the sullen dejected countenance of the guards sufficiently declared that they considered themselves as the object, rather than the partners, of the triumph. When the whole body was united in their camp, those who had served under Maximin, and those who had remained at Rome, insensibly communicated to each other their complaints and apprehensions. The emperors chosen by the army had perished with ignominy; those elected by the senate were seated on the throne.[54] The long discord between the civil and military powers was decided by a war in which the former had obtained a complete victory. The soldiers must now learn a new doctrine of submission to the senate; and, whatever clemency was affected by that politic assembly, they dreaded a slow revenge, coloured by the name of discipline, and justified by fair pretences of the public good. But their fate was still in their own hands; and, if they had courage to despise the vain terrors of an impotent republic, it was easy to convince the world that those who were masters of the arms were masters of the authority of the state.

Massacre of Maximus and Balbinus

When the senate elected two princes, it is probable that, besides the declared reason of providing for the various emergencies of peace and war, they were actuated by the secret desire of weakening by division the despotism of the supreme magistrate. Their policy was effectual, but it proved fatal both to their emperors and to themselves. The jealousy of power was soon exasperated by the difference of character. Maximus despised Balbinus as a luxurious noble, and was in his turn disdained by his colleague as an obscure soldier. Their silent discord was understood rather than seen;[55] but the mutual consciousness prevented them from uniting in any vigorous measures of defence against their common enemies of the Prætorian camp.

A.D. 238, July 15

The whole city was employed in the Capitoline games, and the emperors were left almost alone in the palace. On a sudden they were alarmed by the approach of a troop of desperate assassins. Ignorant of each other's situation or designs, for they already occupied very distant apartments, afraid to give or to

[54] The observation had been made imprudently enough in the acclamations of the senate, and with regard to the soldiers it carried the appearance of a wanton insult. Hist. August. p. 170 [xxi. 12].

[55] Discordiæ tacitæ et quæ intelligerentur potius quam viderentur. Hist. August. p. 170 [xxi. 14]. This well chosen expression is probably stolen from some better writer. [On the coins, however, we see *amor mutuus*, *concordia Augg.*, &c. It was arranged that Balbinus should undertake the war on the Danube, Pupienus that on the Euphrates.]

receive assistance, they wasted the important moments in idle debates and fruitless recriminations. The arrival of the guards put an end to the vain strife. They seized on these emperors of the senate, for such they called them with malicious contempt, stripped them of their garments, and dragged them in insolent triumph through the streets of Rome, with a design of inflicting a slow and cruel death on these unfortunate princes. The fear of a rescue from the faithful Germans of the Imperial guards shortened their tortures; and their bodies, mangled with a thousand wounds, were left exposed to the insults or to the pity of the populace.[56]

The third Gordian remains sole emperor

In the space of a few months six princes had been cut off by the sword. Gordian, who had already received the title of Cæsar, was the only person that occurred to the soldiers as proper to fill the vacant throne.[57] They carried him to the camp and unanimously saluted him Augustus and Emperor.[58] His name was dear to the senate and people; his tender age promised a long impunity of military licence; and the submission of Rome and the provinces to the choice of the Prætorian guards saved the republic, at the expense indeed of its freedom and dignity, from the horrors of a new civil war in the heart of the capital.[59]

Innocence and virtues of Gordian

As the third Gordian was only nineteen years of age at the time of his death, the history of his life, were it known to us with greater accuracy than it really is, would contain little more than the account of his education and the conduct of the ministers who by turns abused or guided the simplicity of his inexperienced youth. Immediately after his accession he fell into the hands of his mother's eunuchs, that pernicious vermin of the East, who, since the days of Elagabalus, had infested the Roman palace. By the artful conspiracy of these wretches an impene-

[56] Herodian, l. viii. p. 287, 288 [8]. [The date is probably August; see Appendix 12. Gibbon accepted 15th July.]

[57] Quia non alius erat in præsenti, is the expression of the Augustan History [xxi. 14].

[58] [Before 29th August, as is proved by Alexandrine coins.]

[59] Quintus Curtius (l. x. c. 9), pays an elegant compliment to the emperor of the day, for having, by his happy accession, extinguished so many fire-brands, sheathed so many swords, and put an end to the evils of a divided government. After weighing with attention every word of the passage, I am of opinion that it suits better with the elevation of Gordian than with any other period of the Roman History. In that case, it may serve to decide the age of Quintus Curtius. Those who place him under the first Cæsars argue from the purity of his style, but are embarrassed by the silence of Quintilian in his accurate list of Roman historians. [It is now generally agreed to place Curtius in the reign of Nero; but of his life we know nothing.]

trable veil was drawn between an innocent prince and his oppressed subjects, the virtuous disposition of Gordian was deceived, and the honours of the empire sold without his knowledge, though in a very public manner, to the most worthless of mankind. We are ignorant by what fortunate accident the emperor escaped from this ignominious slavery, and devolved his confidence on a minister whose wise counsels had no object except the glory of the sovereign and the happiness of the people. It should seem that love and learning introduced Misitheus[60] to the favour of Gordian. The young prince married the daughter of his master of rhetoric, and promoted his father-in-law to the first offices of the empire. Two admirable letters that passed between them are still extant. The minister, with the conscious dignity of virtue, congratulates Gordian that he is delivered from the tyranny of the eunuchs,[61] and still more, that he is sensible of his deliverance. The emperor acknowledges, with an amiable confusion, the errors of his past conduct; and laments, with singular propriety, the misfortune of a monarch from whom a venal tribe of courtiers perpetually labour to conceal the truth.[62]

A.D. 240, Administration of Misitheus

The life of Misitheus had been spent in the profession of letters, not of arms; yet such was the versatile genius of that great man that, when he was appointed Prætorian præfect, he discharged the military duties of his place with vigour and ability. The Persians had invaded Mesopotamia, and threatened Antioch. By the persuasion of his father-in-law, the young emperor quitted the luxury of Rome, opened, for the last time recorded in history, the temple of Janus, and marched in person into the East.[63] On his approach with a great army, the Persians withdrew their garrisons from the cities which they had already

The Persian war, A.D. 242

[60] [The true name of this minister was C. Furius Sabinius Aquila Timesitheus. His name occurs on inscriptions. Gibbon calls him Misitheus after the Augustan History. The marriage of Gordian with his daughter, Tranquillina, is placed too early by Gibbon (240 A.D.). Alexandrine coins prove that it took place in the fourth tribunate of the emperor, between 30th August 241 and 29th August 242.]

[61] Hist. August. p. 161 [xx. 24 and 25]. From some hints in the two letters, I should expect that the eunuchs were not expelled the palace without some degree of gentle violence, and that young Gordian rather approved of, than consented to, their disgrace.

[62] Duxit uxorem filiam Misithei, quem causâ eloquentiæ dignum parentelâ suâ putavit; et præfectum statim fecit; post quod non puerile jam et contemptibile videbatur imperium [ib. 23].

[63] [The army of Gordian halted on its way and cleared Thrace of barbarian invaders, Alans, Goths, and Sarmatians. It has been conjectured that on this occasion Viminacium was made a colonia.]

taken, and retired from the Euphrates to the Tigris.[64] Gordian enjoyed the pleasure of announcing to the senate the first success of his arms, which he ascribed with a becoming modesty and gratitude to the wisdom of his father and præfect. During the whole expedition, Misitheus watched over the safety and discipline of the army; whilst he prevented their dangerous murmurs by maintaining a regular plenty in the camp, and by establishing ample magazines of vinegar, bacon, straw, barley, and wheat, in all the cities of the frontier.[65] But the prosperity of Gordian expired with Misitheus, who died of a flux, not without very strong suspicions of poison. Philip, his successor in the præfecture, was an Arab by birth, and consequently, in the earlier part of his life, a robber by profession. His rise from so obscure a station to the first dignities of the empire seems to prove that he was a bold and able leader. But his boldness prompted him to aspire to the throne, and his abilities were employed to supplant, not to serve, his indulgent master. The minds of the soldiers were irritated by an artificial scarcity, created by his contrivance in the camp; and the distress of the army was attributed to the youth and incapacity of the prince. It is not in our power to trace the successive steps of the secret conspiracy and open sedition which were at length fatal to Gordian. A sepulchral monument was erected to his memory on the spot[66] where he was killed, near the conflux of the Euphrates with the little river Aboras.[67] The fortunate Philip, raised to the empire by the votes of the soldiers, found a ready obedience from the senate and the provinces.[68]

A.D. 243, Arts of Philip

Murder of Gordian, A.D. 244 March

[64] [The successes were due to the abilities of Timesitheus. Carrhæ and Nisibis, which, along with Hatra, had been taken by Sapor in his invasion of 241 A.D., were recovered, and the Roman army, having defeated the Persians at Resaina, prepared to march on Ctesiphon.]

[65] Hist. August. p. 162 [xx. 27]. Aurelius Victor [Cæsar. 27]. Porphyrius in Vit. Plotin. ap. Fabricium Biblioth. Græc. l. iv. c. 36 [c. 3, p. 103, ed. Westermann and Boissonade]. The philosopher Plotinus accompanied the army, prompted by the love of knowledge, and by the hope of penetrating as far as India.

[66] About twenty miles from the little town of Circesium, on the frontier of the two empires. [Eutropius, ix. 2, 3.]

[67] The inscription (which contained a very singular pun) was erased by the order of Licinius, who claimed some degree of relationship to Philip (Hist. August. p. 165 [xx. 34]); but the *tumulus* or mound of earth which formed the sepulchre, still subsisted in the time of Julian. See Ammian. Marcellin. xxiii. 5. [The pun to which Gibbon refers was on the name of Philip. Gordian is described as the conqueror of various peoples. "Victori Persarum, victori, &c.—sed non victori Philipporum." It seems that Gordian had suffered a reverse in some skirmish with the Alans near Philippi.]

[68] Aurelius Victor. Eutrop. ix. 2. Orosius, vii. 20. Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiii. 5. Zosimus, l. i. p. 19 [19]. Philip, who was a native of Bostra, was about forty years of age. [His name was M. Julius Philippus.]

Form of a military republic

We cannot forbear transcribing the ingenious, though somewhat fanciful, description, which a celebrated writer of our own times has traced of the military government of the Roman empire. "What in that age was called the Roman empire was only an irregular republic, not unlike the aristocracy[69] of Algiers,[70] where the militia, possessed of the sovereignty, creates and deposes a magistrate, who is styled a Dey. Perhaps, indeed, it may be laid down as a general rule, that a military government is, in some respects, more republican than monarchical. Nor can it be said that the soldiers only partook of the government by their disobedience and rebellions. The speeches made to them by the emperors, were they not at length of the same nature as those formerly pronounced to the people by the consuls and the tribunes? And although the armies had no regular place or forms of assembly, though their debates were short, their action sudden, and their resolves seldom the result of cool reflection, did they not dispose, with absolute sway, of the public fortune? What was the emperor, except the minister of a violent government, elected for the private benefit of the soldiers?

"When the army a elected Philip, who was Prætorian præfect to the third Gordian, the latter demanded that he might remain sole emperor; he was unable to obtain it. He requested that the power might be equally divided between them; the army would not listen to his speech. He consented to be degraded to the rank of Cæsar; the favour was refused him. He desired, at least, he might be appointed Prætorian præfect; his prayer was rejected. Finally, he pleaded for his life. The army, in these several judgments, exercised the supreme magistracy." According to the historian, whose doubtful narrative the president De Montesquieu has adopted, Philip, who, during the whole transaction, had preserved a sullen silence, was inclined to spare the innocent life of his benefactor; till, recollecting that his innocence might excite a dangerous compassion in the Roman world, he commanded, without regard to his suppliant cries, that he should be seized, stript, and led away to instant death. After a moment's pause the inhuman sentence was executed.[71]

[69] Can the epithet of *Aristocracy* be applied, with any propriety, to the government of Algiers? Every military government floats between the extremes of absolute monarchy and wild democracy.

[70] The military republic of the Mamalukes in Egypt would have afforded M. de Montesquieu (see Considérations sur la Grandeur et la Décadence des Romains, c. 16) a juster and more noble parallel.

[71] The Augustan History (p. 163, 164 [xx. 30]) cannot, in this instance, be reconciled with itself or with probability. How could Philip condemn his predecessor,

Reign of Philip

On his return from the East to Rome, Philip, desirous of obliterating the memory of his crimes, and of captivating the affections of the people, solemnized the secular games with infinite pomp and magnificence. Since their institution or revival by Augustus,[72] they had been celebrated by Claudius, by Domitian, and by Severus, and were now renewed, the fifth time, on the accomplishment of the full period of a thousand years from the foundation of Rome. Every circumstance of the secular games was skilfully adapted to inspire the superstitious mind with deep and solemn reverence. The long interval between them[73] exceeded the term of human life; and, as none of the spectators had already seen them, none could flatter themselves with the expectation of beholding them a second time. The mystic sacrifices were performed, during three nights, on the banks of the Tiber; and the Campus Martius resounded with music and dances, and was illuminated with innumerable lamps and torches. Slaves and strangers were excluded from any participation in these national ceremonies. A chorus of twenty-seven youths, and as many virgins, of noble families, and whose parents were both alive, implored the propitious gods in favour of the present, and for the hope of the rising generation; requesting, in religious hymns, that, according to the faith of their ancient oracles, they would still maintain the virtue, the felicity, and the empire of the Roman people.[74] The magnificence of Philip's shows and entertainments dazzled the eyes of the multitude. The devout were employed in the rites of superstition, whilst the reflecting few revolved in their anxious minds the past history and the future fate of the empire.

Secular games, A.D. 248, April 21

Since Romulus, with a small band of shepherds and outlaws,

Decline of the Roman empire

and yet consecrate his memory? How could he order his public execution, and yet, in his letters to the senate, exculpate himself from the guilt of his death? Philip, though an ambitious usurper, was by no means a mad tyrant. Some chronological difficulties have likewise been discovered by the nice eyes of Tillemont and Muratori, in this supposed association of Philip to the empire.

[72] The account of the last supposed celebration, though in an enlightened period of history, was so very doubtful and obscure, that the alternative seems not doubtful. When the popish jubilees, the copy of the secular games, were invented by Boniface VIII., the crafty pope pretended that he only revived an ancient institution. See M. le Chais, Lettres sur les Jubilès.

[73] Either of a hundred, or a hundred and ten years. Varro and Livy adopted the former opinion, but the infallible authority of the Sybil consecrated the latter (Censorinus de Die Natal. c. 17). The emperors Claudius and Philip, however, did not treat the oracle with implicit respect.

[74] The idea of the secular games is best understood from the poem of Horace, and the description of Zosimus, l. ii. p. 167 [5], &c. [Milliarium Sæculum is on the coins.]

fortified himself on the hills near the Tiber, ten centuries had already elapsed.[75] During the four first ages, the Romans, in the laborious school of poverty, had acquired the virtues of war and government: by the vigorous exertion of those virtues, and by the assistance of fortune, they had obtained, in the course of the three succeeding centuries, an absolute empire over many countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa. The last three hundred years had been consumed in apparent prosperity and internal decline. The nation of soldiers, magistrates, and legislators, who composed the thirty-five tribes of the Roman people, was dissolved into the common mass of mankind, and confounded with the millions of servile provincials, who had received the name, without adopting the spirit, of Romans. A mercenary army, levied among the subjects and barbarians of the frontier, was the only order of men who preserved and abused their independence. By their tumultuary election, a Syrian, a Goth, or an Arab, was exalted to the throne of Rome, and invested with despotic power over the conquests and over the country of the Scipios.

The limits of the Roman empire still extended from the Western Ocean to the Tigris, and from Mount Atlas to the Rhine and the Danube. To the undiscerning eye of the vulgar, Philip appeared a monarch no less powerful than Hadrian or Augustus had formerly been. The form was still the same, but the animating health and vigour were fled. The industry of the people was discouraged and exhausted by a long series of oppression. The discipline of the legions, which alone, after the extinction of every other virtue, had propped the greatness of the state, was corrupted by the ambition, or relaxed by the weakness, of the emperors. The strength of the frontiers, which had always consisted in arms rather than in fortifications, was insensibly undermined; and the fairest provinces were left exposed to the rapaciousness or ambition of the barbarians, who soon discovered the decline of the Roman empire.

[75] The received calculation of Varro assigns to the foundation of Rome an æra that corresponds with the 754th year before Christ. But so little is the chronology of Rome to be depended on in the more early ages, that Sir Isaac Newton has brought the same event as low as the year 627.

CHAPTER VIII

Of the State of Persia after the Restoration of the Monarchy by Artaxerxes[1]

The barbarians of the East and of the North

WHENEVER Tacitus indulges himself in those beautiful episodes, in which he relates some domestic transaction of the Germans or of the Parthians, his principal object is to relieve the attention of the reader from a uniform scene of vice and misery. From the reign of Augustus to the time of Alexander Severus, the enemies of Rome were in her bosom—the tyrants, and the soldiers; and her prosperity had a very distant and feeble interest in the revolutions that might happen beyond the Rhine and the Euphrates. But, when the military order had levelled in wild anarchy the power of the prince, the laws of the senate, and even the discipline of the camp, the barbarians of the North and of the East, who had long hovered on the frontier, boldly attacked the provinces of a declining monarchy. Their vexatious inroads were changed into formidable irruptions, and, after a long vicissitude of mutual calamities, many tribes of the victorious invaders established themselves in the provinces of the Roman empire. To obtain a clearer knowledge of these great events we shall endeavour to form a previous idea of the character, forces, and designs of those nations who avenged the cause of Hannibal and Mithridates.

Revolutions of Asia

In the more early ages of the world, whilst the forest that covered Europe afforded a retreat to a few wandering savages, the inhabitants of Asia were already collected into populous cities, and reduced under extensive empires, the seat of the arts, of luxury and of despotism. The Assyrians reigned over the East,[2] till the sceptre of Ninus and Semiramis dropt from the

[1] [On the sources for Eastern affairs see Appendix 13; on the Zend Avesta and Persian religion, Appendix 14.]

[2] An ancient chronologist quoted by Velleius Paterculus (l. i. c. 6) observes that the Assyrians, the Medes, the Persians, and the Macedonians, reigned over Asia one thousand nine hundred and ninety-five years, from the accession of Ninus to the defeat of Antiochus by the Romans. As the latter of these great events happened 189 years before Christ, the former may be placed 2184 years before the same æra. The Astronomical Observations, found at Babylon by Alexander, went

hands of their enervated successors. The Medes and the Babylonians divided their power, and were themselves swallowed up in the monarchy of the Persians, whose arms could not be confined within the narrow limits of Asia. Followed, as it is said, by two millions of *men*, Xerxes, the descendant of Cyrus, invaded Greece. Thirty thousand *soldiers*, under the command of Alexander, the son of Philip, who was intrusted by the Greeks with their glory and revenge, were sufficient to subdue Persia. The princes of the house of Seleucus usurped and lost the Macedonian command over the East. About the same time that, by an ignominious treaty, they resigned to the Romans the country on this side Mount Taurus, they were driven by the Parthians, an obscure horde of Scythian origin, from all the provinces of Upper Asia. The formidable power of the Parthians, which spread from India to the frontiers of Syria, was in its turn subverted by Ardshir,[3] or Artaxerxes; the founder of a new dynasty, which, under the name of Sassanides, governed Persia till the invasion of the Arabs. This great revolution, whose fatal influence was soon experienced by the Romans, happened in the fourth year of Alexander Severus, two hundred and twenty-six years after the Christian æra.[4]

The Persian monarchy restored by Artaxerxes

Artaxerxes had served with great reputation in the armies of Artaban, the last king of the Parthians, and it appears that he was driven into exile and rebellion by royal ingratitude, the customary reward for superior merit. His birth was obscure, and the obscurity equally gave room to the aspersions of his enemies, and the flattery of his adherents. If we credit the scandal of the former, Artaxerxes sprang from the illegitimate commerce of a tanner's wife with a common soldier.[5] The latter represents him as descended from a branch of the ancient kings of Persia, though time and misfortune had gradually reduced his

fifty years higher. [Babylonian history begins in the fourth chiliad B.C.; Assyrian barely in the 14th century. The second and greater Assyrian empire was founded by Assur-nâsir-pal and Salmanassar II. his son in the ninth century.]

[3] [Ardeshîr is the approved transliteration.]

[4] In the five hundred and thirty-eighth year of the æra of Seleucus. See Agathias, l. ii. p. 63 [27]. This great event (such is the carelessness of the Orientals) is placed by Eutychius as high as the tenth year of Commodus, and by Moses of Chorene as low as the reign of Philip. Ammianus Marcellinus has so servilely copied (xxiii. 6) his ancient materials, which are indeed very good, that he describes the family of the Arsacides as still seated on the Persian throne in the middle of the fourth century.

[5] The tanner's name was Babec; the soldier's, Sassan; from the former Artaxerxes obtained the surname of Babegan; from the latter all his descendants have been styled *Sassanides*. [Ardeshîr IV. was the son of Bâbag, the eleventh prince of Pars or Persis. Bâbagân means "son of Bâbag

ancestors to the humble station of private citizens.[6] As the lineal heir of the monarchy, he asserted his right to the throne, and challenged the noble task of delivering the Persians from the oppression under which they groaned above five centuries since the death of Darius. The Parthians were defeated in three great battles. In the last of these their king Artaban was slain, and the spirit of the nation was for ever broken.[7] The authority of Artaxerxes was solemnly acknowledged in a great assembly held at Balch in Khorasan. Two younger branches of the royal house of Arsaces were confounded among the prostrate satraps. A third, more mindful of ancient grandeur than of present necessity, attempted to retire with a numerous train of vassals, towards their kinsman, the king of Armenia; but this little army of deserters was intercepted and cut off by the vigilance of the conqueror,[8] who boldly assumed the double diadem, and the title of King of Kings, which had been enjoyed by his predecessor.[9] But these pompous titles, instead of gratifying the vanity of the Persian, served only to admonish him of his duty, and to inflame in his soul the ambition of restoring, in their full splendour, the religion and empire of Cyrus.

Reformation of the Magian religion

I. During the long servitude of Persia under the Macedonian and the Parthian yoke, the nations of Europe and Asia had mutually adopted and corrupted each other's superstitions. The Arsacides, indeed, practised the worship of the Magi; but they disgraced and polluted it with a various mixture of foreign idolatry. The memory of Zoroaster, the ancient prophet and philosopher of the Persians,[10] was still revered in the East; but the obsolete and mysterious language in which the Zendavesta

[6] D'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale, *Ardshir*.

[7] Dion Cassius, l. lxxx. [3]. Herodian, l. vi. p. 207 [2]. Abulpharagius Dynast. p. 80. [The battle was fought at Hormuz, between Behbehan and Schuschter. The approved spelling of Artaban is Ardevân. He was the fifth Parthian king of that name.]

[8] See Moses Chorenensis, l. ii. c. 65-71.

[9] [Ardeshîr IV. of the small kingdom of Persis became, when he overthrew the Parthian monarchy, Ardeshîr I. of the great kingdom of Persia. His title was "King of Kings of Eran and Turan". The Parthians were not completely quelled, though they had lost their king, till 232 A.D.]

[10] Hyde and Prideaux, working up the Persian legends and their own conjectures into a very agreeable story, represent Zoroaster as a contemporary of Darius Hystaspis. But it is sufficient to observe that the Greek writers, who lived almost in the same age, agree in placing the æra of Zoroaster many hundred, or even thousand, years before their own time. The judicious criticism of Mr. Moyle perceived, and maintained against his uncle Dr. Prideaux, the antiquity of the Persian prophet. See his work, vol. ii. [Of Zarathustra or Zoroaster himself we know nothing. All the stories about him are mere fables; and it cannot be determined whether he was a god made into a man, or a man who really lived.]

was composed,[11] opened a field of dispute to seventy sects, who variously explained the fundamental doctrines of their religion, and were all equally derided by a crowd of infidels, who rejected the divine mission and miracles of the prophet. To suppress the idolaters, re-unite the schismatics, and confute the unbelievers by the infallible decision of a general council, the pious Artaxerxes summoned the Magi from all parts of his dominions. These priests, who had so long sighed in contempt and obscurity, obeyed the welcome summons; and on the appointed day appeared to the number of about eighty thousand. But as the debates of so tumultuous an assembly could not have been directed by the authority of reason, or influenced by the art of policy, the Persian synod was reduced, by successive operations, to forty thousand, to four thousand, to four hundred, to forty, and at last to seven Magi, the most respected for their learning and piety. One of these, Erdaviraph, a young but holy prelate, received from the hands of his brethren three cups of soporiferous wine. He drank them off, and instantly fell into a long and profound sleep. As soon as he waked, he related to the king and to the believing multitude his journey to Heaven, and his intimate conferences with the Deity. Every doubt was silenced by this supernatural evidence; and the articles of the faith of Zoroaster were fixed with equal authority and precision.[12] A short delineation of that celebrated system will be found useful, not only to display the character of the Persian nation, but to illustrate many of their most important transactions, both in peace and war, with the Roman empire.[13]

Persian theology; two principles

The great and fundamental article of the system was the celebrated doctrine of the two principles; a bold and injudicious attempt of Eastern philosophy to reconcile the existence of moral and physical evil with the attributes of a beneficent Creator and Governor of the world. The first and original Being,

[11] That ancient idiom was called the *Zend*. The language of the commentary, the Pehlvi, though much more modern, has ceased many ages ago to be a living tongue. [It was spoken in the western regions of Iran, Zend in the eastern.] This fact alone (if it is allowed as authentic) sufficiently warrants the antiquity of those writings, which M. d'Anquetil has brought into Europe, and translated into French. [On the Zend Avesta see Appendix 14.]

[12] Hyde de Religione veterum Pers. c. 21.

[13] I have principally drawn this account from the Zendavesta of M. d'Anquetil, and the Sadder, subjoined to Dr. Hyde's treatise. It must, however, be confessed, that the studied obscurity of a prophet, the figurative style of the East, and the deceitful medium of a French or Latin version, may have betrayed us into error and heresy, in this abridgment of Persian theology. [Unfortunately the Sadder is a late compilation,—post-Mahometan.]

in whom, or by whom, the universe exists, is denominated in the writings of Zoroaster, *Time without bounds;* but it must be confessed that this infinite substance seems rather a metaphysical abstraction of the mind than a real object endowed with self-consciousness, or possessed of moral perfections.[14] From either the blind or the intelligent operation of this infinite Time, which bears but too near an affinity with the Chaos of the Greeks, the two secondary but active principles of the universe were from all eternity produced, Ormusd and Ahriman, each of them possessed of the powers of creation, but each disposed, by his invariable nature, to exercise them with different designs.[15] The principle of good is eternally absorbed in light: the principle of evil eternally buried in darkness. The wise benevolence of Ormusd formed man capable of virtue, and abundantly provided his fair habitation with the materials of happiness. By his vigilant providence, the motion of the planets, the order of the seasons, and the temperate mixture of the elements are preserved. But the malice of Ahriman has long since pierced *Ormusd's egg;* or, in other words, has violated the harmony of his works. Since that fatal eruption, the most minute particles of good and evil are intimately intermingled and agitated together, the rankest poisons spring up amidst the most salutary plants; deluges, earthquakes, and conflagrations attest the conflict of Nature; and the little world of man is perpetually shaken by vice and misfortune. Whilst the rest of human kind are led away captives in the chains of their infernal enemy, the faithful Persian alone reserves his religious adoration for his friend and protector Ormusd, and fights under his banner of light, in the full confidence that he shall, in the last day, share the glory of his triumph. At that decisive period the enlightened wisdom of goodness will render the power of Ormusd superior to the furious malice of his rival. Ahriman and his followers, disarmed and subdued, will sink into their native darkness; and virtue will maintain the eternal peace and harmony of the universe.[16]

[14] [This doctrine is not Zoroastrian. Late systems endeavoured to overcome the dualism, and unify the two principles by assuming a higher principle—space, or time, or fate—from which both sprang.]

[15] [Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainya. The law was revealed by Ahura Mazda to Zarathustra (Zoroaster).]

[16] The modern Parsees (and in some degree the Sadder) exalt Ormusd into the first and omnipotent cause, whilst they degrade Ahriman into an inferior but rebellious spirit. Their desire of pleasing the Mahometans may have contributed to refine their theological system. [The doctrine of the future triumph of Ormusd is not in the Zendavesta.]

Religious worship

The theology of Zoroaster was darkly comprehended by foreigners, and even by the far greater number of his disciples; but the most careless observers were struck with the philosophic simplicity of the Persian worship. "That people," says Herodotus,[17] "rejects the use of temples, of altars, and of statues, and smiles at the folly of those nations, who imagine that the gods are sprung from, or bear any affinity with, the human nature. The tops of the highest mountains are the places chosen for sacrifices. Hymns and prayers are the principal worship; the Supreme God who fills the wide circle of heaven, is the object to whom they are addressed." Yet, at the same time, in the true spirit of a polytheist, he accuses them of adoring Earth, Water, Fire, the Winds, and the Sun and Moon. But the Persians of every age have denied the charge, and explained the equivocal conduct which might appear to give a colour to it. The elements, and more particularly Fire, Light, and the Sun, whom they called Mithra, were the objects of their religious reverence, because they considered them as the purest symbols, the noblest productions, and the most powerful agents of the Divine Power and Nature.[18]

Ceremonies and moral precepts

Every mode of religion, to make a deep and lasting impression on the human mind, must exercise our obedience by enjoining practices of devotion, for which we can assign no reason; and must acquire our esteem, by inculcating moral duties analogous to the dictates of our own hearts. The religion of Zoroaster was abundantly provided with the former, and possessed a sufficient portion of the latter. At the age of puberty the faithful Persian was invested with a mysterious girdle, the badge of the divine protection; and from that moment all the actions of his life, even the most indifferent or the most necessary, were sanctified by their peculiar prayers, ejaculations, or genuflexions; the omission of which, under any circumstances, was a grievous sin, not inferior in guilt to the violation of the moral duties. The moral duties, however, of justice, mercy, liberality, &c., were in their turn required of the disciple of Zoroaster, who wished to escape the persecution of Ahriman, and to live with Ormusd in a blissful eternity, where the degree of felicity will be exactly proportioned to the degree of virtue and piety.[19]

[17] Herodotus, l. i. c. 131. But Dr. Prideaux thinks, with reason, that the use of temples was afterwards permitted in the Magian religion.

[18] Hyde de Relig. Pers. c. 8. Notwithstanding all their distinctions and protestations, which seem sincere enough, their tyrants, the Mahometans, have constantly stigmatized them as idolatrous worshippers of the fire.

[19] See the Sadder, the smallest part of which consists of moral precepts. The ceremonies enjoined are infinite and trifling. Fifteen genuflexions, prayers, &c.,

But there are some remarkable instances in which Zoroaster lays aside the prophet, assumes the legislator, and discovers a liberal concern for private and public happiness, seldom to be found among the grovelling or visionary schemes of superstition. Fasting and celibacy, the common means of purchasing the divine favour, he condemns with abhorrence, as a criminal rejection of the best gifts of providence. The saint, in the Magian religion, is obliged to beget children, to plant useful trees, to destroy noxious animals, to convey water to the dry lands of Persia, and to work out his salvation by pursuing all the labours of agriculture. We may quote from the Zend Avesta a wise and benevolent maxim, which compensates for many an absurdity. "He who sows the ground with care and diligence acquires a greater stock of religious merit than he could gain by the repetition of ten thousand prayers." [20] In the spring of every year a festival was celebrated, destined to represent the primitive equality, and the present connexion, of mankind. The stately kings of Persia, exchanging their vain pomp for more genuine greatness, freely mingled with the humblest but most useful of their subjects. On that day the husbandmen were admitted, without distinction, to the table of the king and his satraps. The monarch accepted their petitions, inquired into their grievances, and conversed with them on the most equal terms. "From your labours," was he accustomed to say (and to say with truth, if not with sincerity), "from your labours we receive our subsistence; you derive your tranquillity from our vigilance. since, therefore, we are mutually necessary to each other, let us live together like brothers in concord and love." [21] Such a festival must indeed have degenerated, in a wealthy and despotic empire, into a theatrical representation; but it was at least a comedy well worthy of a royal audience, and which might sometimes imprint a salutary lesson on the mind of a young prince.

Encouragement of agriculture

Had Zoroaster, in all his institutions, invariably supported this exalted character, his name would deserve a place with those of Numa and Confucius, and his system would be justly entitled to all the applause which it has pleased some of our divines, and even some of our philosophers, to bestow on it. But in that motley composition, dictated by reason and passion, by enthusiasm and by selfish motives, some useful and sublime truths were

Power of the Magi

were required whenever the devout Persian cut his nails or made water; or as often as he put on the sacred girdle. Sadder, Art. 14, 50, 60.

[20] Zend Avesta, tom. i. p. 224, and Précis du Système de Zoroastre, tom. iii.

[21] Hyde de Religione Persarum, c. 19.

disgraced by a mixture of the most abject and dangerous superstition. The Magi, or sacerdotal order, were extremely numerous, since, as we have already seen, fourscore thousand of them were convened in a general council. Their forces were multiplied by discipline. A regular hierarchy was diffused through all the provinces of Persia; and the Archimagus, who resided at Balch, was respected as the visible head of the church, and the lawful successor of Zoroaster.[22] The property of the Magi was very considerable. Besides the less invidious possession of a large tract of the most fertile lands of Media,[23] they levied a general tax on the fortunes and the industry of the Persians.[24] "Though your good works," says the interested prophet, "exceed in number the leaves of the trees, the drops of rain, the stars in the heaven, or the sands on the sea-shore, they will all be unprofitable to you, unless they are accepted by the *destour*, or priest. To obtain the acceptation of this guide to salvation, you must faithfully pay him *tithes* of all you possess, of your goods, of your lands, and of your money. If the destour be satisfied, your soul will escape hell tortures; you will secure praise in this world and happiness in the next. For the destours are the teachers of religion; they know all things, and they deliver all men."[25]

These convenient maxims of reverence and implicit faith were doubtless imprinted with care on the tender minds of youth; since the Magi were the masters of education in Persia, and to their hands the children even of the royal family were intrusted.[26] The Persian priests, who were of a speculative genius, preserved and investigated the secrets of Oriental philosophy; and acquired, either by superior knowledge or superior art, the reputation of being well versed in some occult sciences, which have derived their appellation from the Magi.[27] Those of more active dispositions mixed with the world in courts and cities; and it is

[22] Id. c. 28. Both Hyde and Prideaux affect to apply to the Magian, the terms consecrated to the Christian, hierarchy.

[23] Ammian. Marcellin. xxiii. 6. He informs us (as far as we may credit him) of two curious particulars; 1, that the Magi derived some of their most secret doctrines from the Indian Brachmans; and, 2, that they were a tribe or family, as well as order.

[24] The divine institution of tithes exhibits a singular instance of conformity between the law of Zoroaster and that of Moses. Those who cannot otherwise account for it may suppose, if they please, that the Magi of the latter times inserted so useful an interpolation into the writings of their prophet.

[25] Sadder, Art. 8.

[26] Plato in Alcibiad [37].

[27] Pliny (Hist. Natur. l. xxx. c. 1) observes that magic held mankind by the triple chain of religion, of physic, and of astronomy.

observed that the administration of Artaxerxes was in a great measure directed by the counsels of the sacerdotal order, whose dignity, either from policy or devotion, that prince restored to its ancient splendour.[28]

Spirit of persecution

The first counsel of the Magi was agreeable to the unsociable genius of their faith,[29] to the practice of ancient kings,[30] and even to the example of their legislator, who had fallen a victim to a religious war excited by his own intolerant zeal.[31] By an edict of Artaxerxes, the exercise of every worship, except that of Zoroaster, was severely prohibited. The temples of the Parthians, and the statues of their deified monarchs, were thrown down with ignominy.[32] The sword of Aristotle (such was the name given by the Orientals to the polytheism and philosophy of the Greeks) was easily broken:[33] the flames of persecution soon reached the more stubborn Jews and Christians;[34] nor did they spare the heretics of their own nation and religion. The majesty of Ormusd, who was jealous of a rival, was seconded by the despotism of Artaxerxes, who could not suffer a rebel; and the schismatics within his vast empire were soon reduced to the inconsiderable number of eighty thousand.[35] This spirit of persecution reflects dishonour on the religion of Zoroaster; but, as it was not productive of any civil commotion, it served to strengthen the new monarchy by uniting all the various inhabitants of Persia in the bands of religious zeal.

Establishment of the royal authority in the provinces

II. Artaxerxes, by his valour and conduct, had wrested the sceptre of the East from the ancient royal family of Parthia. There still remained the more difficult task of establishing, throughout the vast extent of Persia, a uniform and vigorous administration. The weak indulgence of the Arsacides had resigned to their sons and brothers the principal provinces and the greatest offices of the kingdom, in the nature of hereditary

[28] Agathias, l. iv. p. 134 [24. As nothing is said here of the Magi, it has been supposed by Sir Wm. Smith that Gibbon meant to refer to ii. 26.]

[29] Mr. Hume, in the Natural History of Religion, sagaciously remarks that the most refined and philosophic sects are constantly the most intolerant.

[30] Cicero de Legibus, ii. 10. Xerxes, by the advice of the Magi, destroyed the temples of Greece.

[31] Hyde de Rel. Persar. c. 23, 24. D'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale, *Zerdusht*. Life of Zoroaster in tom. ii. of the Zendavesta.

[32] Compare Moses of Chorene, l. ii. c. 74, with Ammian. Marcellin. xxiii. 6. Hereafter I shall make use of these passages.

[33] Rabbi Abraham, in the Tarikh Schickard, p. 108, 109.

[34] Basnage, Histoire des Juifs, l. viii. c. 3. Sozomen, l. ii. c. 1. Manes, who suffered an ignominious death, may be deemed a Magian, as well as a Christian, heretic. [The reference to Sozomen should apparently be ii. 9 *sqq.*]

[35] Hyde de Religione Persar. c. 21.

possessions. The *vitaxæ*, or eighteen most powerful satraps, were permitted to assume the regal title, and the vain pride of the monarch was delighted with a nominal dominion over so many vassal kings. Even tribes of barbarians in their mountains, and the Greek cities of Upper Asia,[36] within their walls, scarcely acknowledged, or seldom obeyed, any superior; and the Parthian empire exhibited, under other names, a lively image of the feudal system[37] which has since prevailed in Europe. But the active victor, at the head of a numerous and disciplined army, visited in person every province of Persia. The defeat of the boldest rebels and the reduction of the strongest fortifications[38] diffused the terror of his arms and prepared the way for the peaceful reception of his authority. An obstinate resistance was fatal to the chiefs; but their followers were treated with lenity.[39] A cheerful submission was rewarded with honours and riches; but the prudent Artaxerxes, suffering no person except himself to assume the title of king, abolished every intermediate power between the throne and the people. His kingdom, nearly equal in extent to modern Persia, was, on every side, bounded by the sea or by great rivers,—by the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Araxes, the Oxus, and the Indus; by the Caspian Sea and the Gulf of Persia.[40] That country was computed to contain, in the

Extent and population of Persia

[36] These colonies were extremely numerous. Seleucus Nicator founded thirty-nine cities, all named from himself, or some of his relations (see Appian in Syriac. p. 124 [57]). The æra of Seleucus (still in use among the eastern Christians) appears as late as the year 508, of Christ 196, on the medals of the Greek cities within the Parthian empire. See Moyle's works, vol. i. p. 273, &c., and M. Freret. Mém. de l'Académie, tom. xix.

[37] The modern Persians distinguish that period as the dynasty of the kings of the nations. See Plin. Hist. Nat. vi. 25.

[38] Eutychius (tom. i. p. 367, 371, 375) relates the siege of the Island of Mesene in the Tigris, with some circumstances not unlike the story of Nisus and Scylla.

[39] Agathias, ii. p. 64 [26]. The princes of Segestan defended their independence during many years. As romances generally transport to an ancient period the events of their own time, it is not impossible that the fabulous exploits of Rustan Prince of Segestan may have been grafted on this real history.

[40] We can scarcely attribute to the Persian monarchy the sea coast of Gedrosia or Macran, which extends along the Indian Ocean from Cape Jask (the promontory Capella) to Cape Goadel. In the time of Alexander, and probably many ages afterwards, it was thinly inhabited by a savage people of Ichthyophagi, or Fishermen, who knew no arts, who acknowledged no master, and who were divided by inhospitable deserts from the rest of the world. (See Arrian de Reb. Indicis [26].) In the twelfth century, the little town of Taiz (supposed by M. d'Anville to be the Tesa of Ptolemy) was peopled and enriched by the resort of the Arabian merchants. (See Geographia Nubiens. p. 58, and d'Anville Géographie Ancienne, tom. ii. p. 283.) In the last age the whole country was divided between three princes, one Mahometan and two Idolaters, who maintained their independence against the successors of Shaw Abbas. (Voyages de Tavernier, part i. l. v. p. 635.)

last century, five hundred and fifty-four cities, sixty thousand villages, and about forty millions of souls.[41] If we compare the administration of the house of Sassan with that of the house of Sesi, the political influence of the Magian with that of the Mahometan religion, we shall probably infer that the kingdom of Artaxerxes contained at least as great a number of cities, villages, and inhabitants. But it must likewise be confessed that in every age the want of harbours on the sea coast, and the scarcity of fresh water in the inland provinces, have been very unfavourable to the commerce and agriculture of the Persians; who, in the calculation of their numbers, seem to have indulged one of the meanest, though most common, artifices of national vanity.

Recapitulation of the wars between the Parthian and Roman empire

As soon as the ambitious mind of Artaxerxes had triumphed over the resistance of his vassals, he began to threaten the neighbouring states, who, during the long slumber of his predecessors, had insulted Persia with impunity. He obtained some easy victories over the wild Scythians and the effeminate Indians; but the Romans were an enemy who, by their past injuries and present power, deserved the utmost efforts of his arms. A forty years' tranquillity, the fruit of valour and moderation, had succeeded the victories of Trajan. During the period that elapsed from the accession of Marcus to the reign of Alexander, the Roman and the Parthian empires were twice engaged in war; and, although the whole strength of the Arsacides contended with a part only of the forces of Rome, the event was most commonly in favour of the latter. Macrinus, indeed, prompted by his precarious situation and pusillanimous temper, purchased a peace at the expense of near two millions of our money;[42] but the generals of Marcus, the emperor Severus, and his son, erected many trophies in Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria. Among their exploits, the imperfect relation of which would have unseasonably interrupted the more important series of domestic revolutions, we shall only mention the repeated calamities of the two great cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon.

Cities Seleucia and Ctesiphon

Seleucia, on the western bank of the Tigris, about forty-five miles to the north of ancient Babylon, was the capital of the

[41] Chardin, tom. iii. c. 1, 2, 3. [The number seems too high. At the present time the population of Iran and Turan (including Afghanistan, Beluchistan, &c.) is said to be between fifteen and sixteen millions.]

[42] Dion, l. xxviii. p. 1335 [27. Two hundred million sesterces. Yet the coins of 218 A.D. boast of a Victoria Parthica.]

Macedonian conquests in Upper Asia.[43] Many ages after the fall of their empire, Seleucia retained the genuine characters of a Grecian colony—arts, military virtue, and the love of freedom. The independent republic was governed by a senate of three hundred nobles; the people consisted of six hundred thousand citizens; the walls were strong, and, as long as concord prevailed among the several orders of the state, they viewed with contempt the power of the Parthian: but the madness of faction was sometimes provoked to implore the dangerous aid of the common enemy, who was posted almost at the gates of the colony.[44] The Parthian monarchs, like the Mogul sovereigns of Hindostan, delighted in the pastoral life of their Scythian ancestors; and the Imperial camp was frequently pitched in the plain of Ctesiphon, on the eastern bank of the Tigris, at the distance of only three miles from Seleucia.[45] The innumerable attendants on luxury and despotism resorted to the court, and the little village of Ctesiphon insensibly swelled into a great city.[46] Under the reign of Marcus, the Roman generals penetrated as far as Ctesiphon and Seleucia.[47] They were received as friends by the Greek colony; they attacked as
A.D. 165 enemies the seat of the Parthian kings; yet both cities experienced the same treatment. The sack and conflagration of Seleucia, with the massacre of three hundred thousand of the inhabitants, tarnished the glory of the Roman triumph.[48] Seleucia, already exhausted by the neighbourhood of a too
A.D. 198 powerful rival, sunk under the fatal blow; but Ctesiphon, in about thirty-three years, had sufficiently recovered its strength to maintain an obstinate siege against the emperor Severus. The city was, however, taken by assault; the king, who de-

[43] For the precise situation of Babylon, Seleucia, Ctesiphon, Modain, and Bagdad, cities often confounded with each other, see an excellent Geographical Tract of M. d'Anville, in Mém. de l'Académie, tom. xxx.

[44] Tacit. Annal. vi. 42. Plin. Hist. Nat. vi. 26.

[45] This may be inferred from Strabo, l. xvi. p. 743.

[46] That most curious traveller, Bernier (see Hist. de Voyages, tom. x.), who followed the camp of Aurengzebe from Delhi to Cashmir, describes with great accuracy the immense moving city. The guard of cavalry consisted of 35,000 men, that of infantry of 10,000. It was computed that the camp contained 150,000 horses, mules, and elephants; 50,000 camels, 50,000 oxen, and between 300,000 and 400,000 persons. Almost all Delhi followed the court, whose magnificence supported its industry.

[47] [These successes were achieved by Avidius Cassius. He took Nisibis, and Dausara near Edessa. The Parthians were defeated at Europos in Cyrrhestica.]

[48] Dion, l. lxxi. p. 1178 [2]. Hist. August. p. 38 [v. 8]. Eutrop. viii. 10. Euseb. in Chronic. [ann. 2180]. Quadratus (quoted in the Augustan History) attempted to vindicate the Romans by alleging that the citizens of Seleucia had first violated their faith.

fended it in person, escaped with precipitation; an hundred thousand captives and a rich booty rewarded the fatigues of the Roman soldiers.[49] Notwithstanding these misfortunes, Ctesiphon succeeded to Babylon and to Seleucia as one of the great capitals of the East.[50] In summer, the monarch of Persia enjoyed at Ecbatana the cool breezes of the mountains of Media; but the mildness of the climate engaged him to prefer Ctesiphon for his winter residence.

Conquest of Osrhoene by the Romans

From these successful inroads the Romans derived no real or lasting benefit; nor did they attempt to preserve such distant conquests, separated from the provinces of the empire by a large tract of intermediate desert. The reduction of the kingdom of Osrhoene was an acquisition of less splendour indeed, but of a far more solid advantage. That little state occupied the northern and most fertile part of Mesopotamia, between the Euphrates and the Tigris. Edessa, its capital, was situated about twenty miles beyond the former of those rivers, and the inhabitants, since the time of Alexander, were a mixed race of Greeks, Arabs, Syrians, and Armenians.[51] The feeble sovereigns of Osrhoene, placed on the dangerous verge of two contending empires, were attached from inclination to the Parthian cause; but the superior power of Rome exacted from them a reluctant homage, which is still attested by their medals.[52] After the conclusion of the Parthian war under Marcus, it was judged prudent to secure some substantial pledges of their doubtful fidelity. Forts were constructed in several parts of the country, and a Roman garrison was fixed in the strong town of Nisibis. During the troubles that followed the death of Commodus, the princes of Osrhoene attempted to shake off the yoke; but the stern policy of Severus confirmed their dependence,[53] and the perfidy of Caracalla completed the easy conquest. Abgarus, the last king[54] of Edessa, was sent in A.D. 216 chains to Rome, his dominions reduced into a province, and his

[49] Dion, l. lxxv. p. 1263 [9]. Herodian, l. iii. p. 120 [9]. Hist. August. p. 70 [x. 16. *Hiemali prope tempore*, which fixes the capture to end of 197 or beginning of 198 A.D.]

[50] [Ctesiphon was restored by Sapor II.]

[51] The polished citizens of Antioch called those of Edessa mixed barbarians. It was, however, some praise, that, of the three dialects of the Syriac, the purest and most elegant (the Aramæan) was spoke at Edessa. This remark M. Bayer (Hist. Edess. p. 5) has borrowed from George of Malatia, a Syrian writer.

[52] [Compare Eckhel, iii. 514.]

[53] Dion, l. lxxv. p. 1248, 1249, 1250 [1, 2, 3]. M. Bayer has neglected to use this most important passage.

[54] [*Basileus* was the title.]

capital dignified with the rank of colony;[55] and thus the Romans, about ten years before the fall of the Parthian monarchy, obtained a firm and permanent establishment beyond the Euphrates.[56]

Artaxerxes claims the provinces of Asia, and declares war against the Romans, A.D. 230

Prudence as well as glory might have justified a war on the side of Artaxerxes, had his views been confined to the defence or the acquisition of a useful frontier. But the ambitious Persian openly avowed a far more extensive design of conquest; and he thought himself able to support his lofty pretensions by the arms of reason as well as by those of power. Cyrus, he alleged, had first subdued, and his successors had for a long time possessed, the whole extent of Asia, as far as the Propontis and the Ægean Sea; the provinces of Caria and Ionia, under their empire, had been governed by Persian satraps; and all Egypt, to the confines of Æthiopia, had acknowledged their sovereignty.[57] Their rights had been suspended, but not destroyed, by a long usurpation;[58] and, as soon as he received the Persian diadem, which birth and successful valour had placed upon his head, the first great duty of his station called upon him to restore the ancient limits and splendour of the monarchy. The Great King, therefore (such was the haughty style of his embassies to the Emperor Alexander), commanded the Romans instantly to depart from all the provinces of his ancestors, and, yielding to the Persians the empire of Asia, to content themselves with the undisturbed possession of Europe. This haughty mandate was delivered by four hundred of the tallest and most beautiful of the Persians; who, by their fine horses, splendid arms, and rich apparel, displayed the pride and greatness of their master.[59] Such an embassy was much less an offer of negotiation than a declaration of war. Both Alexander Severus and Artaxerxes, collecting the military force of the Roman and Persian monarchies, resolved in this important contest to lead their armies in person.

Pretended victory of Alexander Severus, A.D. 233

If we credit what should seem the most authentic of all

[55] [Caracalla promoted Carrhæ to be a Roman colony. Eckhel, iii. 508. He seems to have formed the design of annexing Armenia as a province.]

[56] This kingdom, from Osrhoes, who gave a new name to the country, to the last Abgarus, had lasted 353 years. See the learned work of M. Bayer, Historia Osrhoena et Edessena.

[57] Xenophon, in the preface to the Cyropædia, gives a clear and magnificent idea of the extent of the empire of Cyrus. Herodotus (l. iii. c. 79, &c.) enters into a curious and particular description of the twenty great *Satrapies* into which the Persian empire was divided by Darius Hystaspis.

[58] [Dion, lxxx. 4, 1.]

[59] Herodian, vi. 209, 212 [2 and 4].

records, an oration, still extant, and delivered by the emperor himself to the senate, we must allow that the victory of Alexander Severus was not inferior to any of those formerly obtained over the Persians by the son of Philip. The army of the Great King consisted of one hundred and twenty thousand horse, clothed in complete armour of steel; of seven hundred elephants, with towers filled with archers on their backs; and of eighteen hundred chariots armed with scythes. This formidable host, the like of which is not to be found in eastern history, and has scarcely been imagined in eastern romance,[60] was discomfited in a great battle, in which the Roman Alexander approved himself an intrepid soldier and a skilful general. The Great King fled before his valour: an immense booty and the conquest of Mesopotamia were the immediate fruits of this signal victory. Such are the circumstances of this ostentatious and improbable relation, dictated, as it too plainly appears, by the vanity of the monarch, adorned by the unblushing servility of his flatterers, and received without contradiction by a distant and obsequious senate.[61] Far from being inclined to believe that the arms of Alexander obtained any memorable advantage over the Persians, we are induced to suspect that all this blaze of imaginary glory was designed to conceal some real disgrace.

More probable account of the war

Our suspicions are confirmed by the authority of a contemporary historian, who mentions the virtues of Alexander with respect, and his faults with candour. He describes the judicious plan which had been formed for the conduct of the war. Three Roman armies were destined to invade Persia at the same time, and by different roads. But the operations of the campaign,

[60] There were two hundred scythed chariots at the battle of Arbela, in the host of Darius. In the vast army of Tigranes, which was vanquished by Lucullus, seventeen thousand horse only were completely armed. Antiochus brought fifty-four elephants into the field against the Romans: by his frequent wars and negotiations with the princes of India, he had once collected an hundred and fifty of those great animals; but it may be questioned, whether the most powerful monarch of Hindostan ever formed a line of battle of seven hundred elephants. Instead of three or four thousand elephants, which the Great Mogul was supposed to possess, Tavernier (Voyages, part ii. l. i. p. 198) discovered, by a more accurate inquiry, that he had only five hundred for his baggage, and eighty or ninety for the service of war. The Greeks have varied with regard to the number which Porus brought into the field; but Quintus Curtius (viii. 13), in this instance judicious and moderate, is contented with eighty-five elephants, distinguished by their size and strength. In Siam, where these animals are the most numerous and the most esteemed, eighteen elephants are allowed as a sufficient proportion for each of the nine brigades into which a just army is divided. The whole number, of one hundred and sixty-two elephants of war, may sometimes be doubled. Hist. des Voyages, tom. ix. p. 260.

[61] Hist. August. p. 133 [xviii. 55].

though wisely concerted, were not executed either with ability or success. The first of these armies, as soon as it had entered the marshy plains of Babylon, towards the artificial conflux of the Euphrates and the Tigris,[62] was encompassed by the superior numbers, and destroyed by the arrows, of the enemy. The alliance of Chosroes, king of Armenia,[63] and the long tract of mountainous country, in which the Persian cavalry was of little service, opened a secure entrance into the heart of Media to the second of the Roman armies. These brave troops laid waste the adjacent provinces, and by several successful actions against Artaxerxes gave a faint colour to the emperor's vanity. But the retreat of this victorious army was imprudent, or at least unfortunate. In repassing the mountains, great numbers of soldiers perished by the badness of the roads and the severity of the winter season. It had been resolved that whilst these two great detachments penetrated into the opposite extremes of the Persian dominions, the main body, under the command of Alexander himself, should support their attack by invading the centre of the kingdom. But the unexperienced youth, influenced by his mother's counsels, and perhaps by his own fears, deserted the bravest troops and the fairest prospect of victory; and, after consuming in Mesopotamia an inactive and inglorious summer, he led back to Antioch an army diminished by sickness, and provoked by disappointment. The behaviour of Artaxerxes had been very different. Flying with rapidity from the hills of Media to the marshes of the Euphrates, he had everywhere opposed the invaders in person; and in either fortune had united with the ablest conduct the most undaunted resolution. But in several obstinate engagements against the veteran legions of Rome the Persian monarch had lost the flower of his troops. Even his victories had weakened his power. The favourable opportunities of the absence of Alexander, and of the confusions that followed that emperor's death, presented themselves in vain to his ambition. Instead of expelling the Romans, as he pretended, from the continent of Asia, he found himself

[62] M. de Tillemont has already observed that Herodian's geography is somewhat confused.

[63] Moses of Chorene (Hist. Armen. l. ii. c. 71) illustrates this invasion of Media, by asserting that Chosroes, King of Armenia, defeated Artaxerxes, and pursued him to the confines of India. The exploits of Chosroes have been magnified, and he acted as a dependent ally to the Romans. [But Chosroes really inflicted a serious defeat on Ardeshîr in 228, drove him back from Armenia, and invaded his realm, pressing as far as Ctesiphon, if not to the borders of Arabia. The Romans had not yet appeared on the scene.]

unable to wrest from their hands the little province of Mesopotamia.[64]

Character and maxims of Artaxerxes, A.D. 240

The reign of Artaxerxes, which from the last defeat of the Parthians lasted only fourteen years, forms a memorable æra in the history of the East, and even in that of Rome. His character seems to have been marked by those bold and commanding features that generally distinguish the princes who conquer, from those who inherit, an empire. Till the last period of the Persian monarchy, his code of laws was respected as the groundwork of their civil and religious policy.[65] Several of his sayings are preserved. One of them in particular discovers a deep insight into the constitution of government. "The authority of the prince," said Artaxerxes, "must be defended by a military force; that force can only be maintained by taxes; all taxes must, at last, fall upon agriculture; and agriculture can never flourish except under the protection of justice and moderation."[66] Artaxerxes bequeathed his new empire, and his ambitious designs against the Romans, to Sapor, a son not unworthy of his great father; but those designs were too extensive for the power of Persia, and served only to involve both nations in a long series of destructive wars and reciprocal calamities.

Military power of the Persians

The Persians, long since civilized and corrupted, were very far from possessing the martial independence, and the intrepid hardiness, both of mind and body, which have rendered the northern barbarians masters of the world. The science of war, that constituted the more rational force of Greece and Rome, as it now does of Europe, never made any considerable progress in the East. Those disciplined evolutions which harmonize and animate a confused multitude were unknown to the Persians. They were equally unskilled in the arts of constructing, besieging, or defending regular fortifications. They trusted more to their numbers than to their courage; more to their courage than to their discipline. The infantry was a half-armed, spiritless

Their infantry contemptible

[64] For the account of this war, see Herodian, l. vi. p. 209, 212 [5]. The old abbreviators and modern compilers have blindly followed the Augustan History. [Though no very glorious exploit was wrought in this campaign of Alexander, it is clear that the Persians were completely checked in their advance westward, and that the Romans gained some victories. Cp. Aurelius Victor, Cæsar. 24, 2, and Eutropius, viii. 23. Not an inch of ground was lost to the empire.]

[65] Eutychius, tom. ii. p. 180, vers. Pocock. The great Chosroes Noushirwan sent the code of Artaxerxes to all his satraps, as the invariable rule of their conduct.

[66] D'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale, au mot *Ardshir*. We may observe that, after an ancient period of fables, and a long interval of darkness, the modern histories of Persia begin to assume an air of truth with the dynasty of the Sassanides.

crowd of peasants, levied in haste by the allurements of plunder, and as easily dispersed by a victory as by a defeat. The monarch and his nobles transported into the camp the pride and luxury of the seraglio. Their military operations were impeded by a useless train of women, eunuchs, horses, and camels; and in the midst of a successful campaign the Persian host was often separated or destroyed by an unexpected famine.[67]

Their cavalry excellent

But the nobles of Persia, in the bosom of luxury and despotism, preserved a strong sense of personal gallantry and national honour. From the age of seven years they were taught to speak truth, to shoot with the bow, and to ride; and it was universally confessed that in the two last of these arts they had made a more than common proficiency.[68] The most distinguished youth were educated under the monarch's eye, practised their exercises in the gate of his palace, and were severely trained up to the habits of temperance and obedience in their long and laborious parties of hunting. In every province the satrap maintained a like school of military virtue. The Persian nobles (so natural is the idea of feudal tenures) received from the king's bounty lands and houses on the condition of their service in war. They were ready on the first summons to mount on horseback, with a martial and splendid train of followers, and to join the numerous bodies of guards, who were carefully selected from among the most robust slaves and the bravest adventurers of Asia. These armies, both of light and of heavy cavalry, equally formidable by the impetuosity of their charge and the rapidity of their motions, threatened, as an impending cloud, the eastern provinces of the declining empire of Rome.[69]

[67] Herodian, l. vi. p. 214 [5]. Ammianus Marcellinus, l. xxiii. c. 6. Some differences may be observed between the two historians, the natural effects of the changes produced by a century and a half.

[68] The Persians are still the most skilful horsemen, and their horses the finest, in the East.

[69] From Herodotus, Xenophon, Herodian, Ammianus, Chardin, &c., I have extracted such *probable* accounts of the Persian nobility, as seem either common to every age, or particular to that of the Sassanides.

CHAPTER IX

The State of Germany till the Invasion of the Barbarians, in the Time of the Emperor Decius

The government and religion of Persia have deserved some notice from their connexion with the decline and fall of the Roman empire. We shall occasionally mention the Scythian or Sarmatian tribes, which, with their arms and horses, their flocks and herds, their wives and families, wandered over the immense plains which spread themselves from the Caspian Sea to the Vistula, from the confines of Persia to those of Germany. But the warlike Germans, who first resisted, then invaded, and at length overturned, the Western monarchy of Rome, will occupy a much more important place in this history, and possess a stronger, and, if we may use the expression, a more domestic, claim to our attention and regard. The most civilized nations of modern Europe issued from the woods of Germany, and in the rude institutions of those barbarians we may still distinguish the original principles of our present laws and manners. In their primitive state of simplicity and independence, the Germans were surveyed by the discerning eye, and delineated by the masterly pencil, of Tacitus, the first of historians who applied the science of philosophy to the study of facts. The expressive conciseness of his descriptions has deserved to exercise the diligence of innumerable antiquarians, and to excite the genius and penetration of the philosophic historians of our own times. The subject, however various and important, has already been so frequently, so ably, and so successfully discussed, that it is now grown familiar to the reader, and difficult to the writer. We shall therefore content ourselves with observing, and indeed with repeating, some of the most important circumstances of climate, of manners, and of institutions, which rendered the wild barbarians of Germany such formidable enemies to the Roman power.

Extent of Germany

Ancient Germany, excluding from its independent limits the province westward of the Rhine, which had submitted to the

Roman yoke, extended itself over a third part of Europe.[1] Almost the whole of modern Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Livonia, Prussia, and the greater part of Poland, were peopled by the various tribes of one great nation, whose complexion, manners, and language denoted a common origin, and preserved a striking resemblance. On the west, ancient Germany was divided by the Rhine from the Gallic, and on the south by the Danube from the Illyrian, provinces of the empire. A ridge of hills, rising from the Danube, and called the Carpathian Mountains, covered Germany on the side of Dacia or Hungary. The eastern frontier was faintly marked by the mutual fears of the Germans and the Sarmatians, and was often confounded by the mixture of warring and confederating tribes of the two nations. In the remote darkness of the north the ancients imperfectly descried a frozen ocean that lay beyond the Baltic Sea and beyond the peninsula, or islands,[2] of Scandinavia.

Climate

Some ingenious writers[3] have suspected that Europe was much colder formerly than it is at present; and the most ancient descriptions of the climate of Germany tend exceedingly to confirm their theory. The general complaints of intense frost and eternal winter are perhaps little to be regarded, since we have no method of reducing to the accurate standard of the thermometer the feelings or the expressions of an orator born in the happier regions of Greece or Asia. But I shall select two remarkable circumstances of a less equivocal nature. 1. The great rivers which covered the Roman provinces, the Rhine and the Danube, were frequently frozen over, and capable of supporting the most enormous weights. The barbarians, who often chose that severe season for their inroads, transported, without apprehension or danger, their numerous armies, their cavalry, and

[1] [Though the author exaggerates the extent of ancient Germany towards the east, he is not so far wrong as has sometimes been supposed. Speaking roughly, German tribes occupied the whole of Europe between the Rhine and the Vistula, the Northern Sea and the Danube. Vandals, Burgundians, Turcilingi, Skiri, and Gutones held the land between the Oder and Vistula.]

[2] The modern philosophers of Sweden seem agreed that the waters of the Baltic gradually sink in a regular proportion, which they have ventured to estimate at half an inch every year. Twenty centuries ago, the flat country of Scandinavia must have been covered by the sea; while the high lands rose above the waters, as so many islands of various forms and dimensions. Such indeed is the notion given us by Mela, Pliny, and Tacitus, of the vast countries round the Baltic. See in the Bibliothèque Raisonnée, tom. xl. and xlv., a large abstract of Dalin's History of Sweden, composed in the Swedish language.

[3] In particular, Mr. Hume, and the Abbé du Bos, and M. Pelloutier, Hist. des Celtes, tom. i.

their heavy waggons, over a vast and solid bridge of ice.[4] Modern ages have not presented an instance of a like phenomenon. 2. The reindeer, that useful animal, from whom the savage of the North derives the best comforts of his dreary life, is of a constitution that supports, and even requires, the most intense cold. He is found on the rock of Spitzberg, within ten degrees of the pole; he seems to delight in the snows of Lapland and Siberia; but at present he cannot subsist, much less multiply, in any country to the south of the Baltic.[5] In the time of Cæsar, the reindeer, as well as the elk and the wild bull, was a native of the Hercynian forest, which then overshadowed a great part of Germany and Poland.[6] The modern improvements sufficiently explain the causes of the diminution of the cold. These immense woods have been gradually cleared, which intercepted from the earth the rays of the sun.[7] The morasses have been drained, and, in proportion as the soil has been cultivated, the air has become more temperate. Canada, at this day, is an exact picture of ancient Germany. Although situate in the same parallel with the finest provinces of France and England, that country experiences the most rigorous cold. The reindeer are very numerous, the ground is covered with deep and lasting snow, and the great river of St. Lawrence is regularly frozen, in a season when the waters of the Seine and the Thames are usually free from ice.[8]

Its effects on the natives

It is difficult to ascertain, and easy to exaggerate, the influence of the climate of ancient Germany over the minds and bodies of the natives. Many writers have supposed, and most have allowed, though, as it should seem, without any adequate proof, that the rigorous cold of the North was favourable to long life and generative vigour, that the women were more fruitful, and

[4] Diodorus Siculus, l. v. p. 340, edit. Wessel [25]. Herodian, l. vi. p. 221 [7]. Jornandes, c. 55. On the banks of the Danube, the wine, when brought to table, was frequently frozen into great lumps, *frusta vini*. Ovid Epist. ex Ponto, l. iv. 7, 7-10. Virgil Georgic. l. iii. 355. The fact is confirmed by a soldier and a philosopher, who had experienced the intense cold of Thrace. See Xenophon, Anabasis, l. vii. p. 560, edit. Hutchinson [4]. [Milman in his note on this passage refers to an incident in the Thirty Years' War. In 1635 "Jan van Werth, an Imperialist partisan, crossed the Rhine from Heidelberg on the ice with 5000 men, and surprised Spires".]

[5] Buffon, Histoire Naturelle, tom. xii. p. 79, 116.

[6] Cæsar de Bell. Gallic. vi. 23, &c. The most inquisitive of the Germans were ignorant of its utmost limits, although some of them had travelled in it more than sixty days' journey.

[7] Cluverius (Germania Antiqua, l. iii. c. 47) investigates the small and scattered remains of the Hercynian Wood.

[8] Charlevoix, Histoire du Canada.

the human species more prolific, than in warmer or more temperate climates.[9] We may assert, with greater confidence, that the keen air of Germany formed the large and masculine limbs of the natives, who were, in general, of a more lofty stature than the people of the South,[10] gave them a kind of strength better adapted to violent exertions than to patient labour, and inspired them with constitutional bravery, which is the result of nerves and spirits. The severity of a winter campaign, that chilled the courage of the Roman troops, was scarcely felt by these hardy children of the North,[11] who, in their turn, were unable to resist the summer heats, and dissolved away in languor and sickness under the beams of an Italian sun.[12]

Origin of the Germans

There is not anywhere upon the globe a large tract of country, which we have discovered destitute of inhabitants, or whose first population can be fixed with any degree of historical certainty. And yet, as the most philosophic minds can seldom refrain from investigating the infancy of great nations, our curiosity consumes itself in toilsome and disappointed efforts. When Tacitus considered the purity of the German blood, and the forbidding aspect of the country, he was disposed to pronounce those barbarians *Indigenæ*, or natives of the soil. We may allow with safety, and perhaps with truth, that ancient Germany was not originally peopled by any foreign colonies already formed into a political society;[13] but that the name and nation received their existence from the gradual union of some wandering savages of the Hercynian woods. To assert those savages to have been the spontaneous production of the earth which they inhabited would be a rash inference, condemned by religion, and unwarranted by reason.

[9] Olaus Rudbeck asserts that the Swedish women often bear ten or twelve children, and not uncommonly twenty or thirty; but the authority of Rudbeck is much to be suspected.

[10] In hos artus, in hæc corpora, quæ miramur, excrescunt. Tacit. Germania, c. 20. Cluver. l. i. c. 14.

[11] Plutarch. in Mario. The Cimbri, by way of amusement, often slid down mountains of snow on their broad shields.

[12] The Romans made war in all climates, and by their excellent discipline were in a great measure preserved in health and vigour. It may be remarked that man is the only animal which can live and multiply in every country from the equator to the poles. The hog seems to approach the nearest to our species in that privilegs.

[13] Tacit. German. c. 3. The emigration of the Gauls followed the course of the Danube, and discharged itself on Greece and Asia. Tacitus could discover only one inconsiderable tribe that retained any traces of a Gallic origin. [The Cotini, c. 43. They were certainly not Gallic.]

Such rational doubt is but ill suited with the genius of popular vanity. Among the nations who have adopted the Mosaic history of the world, the ark of Noah has been of the same use, as was formerly to the Greeks and Romans the siege of Troy. On a narrow basis of acknowledged truth, an immense but rude superstructure of fable has been erected; and the wild Irishman,[14] as well as the wild Tartar,[15] could point out the individual son of Japhet from whose loins his ancestors were lineally descended. The last century abounded with antiquarians of profound learning and easy faith, who, by the dim light of legends and traditions, of conjectures and etymologies, conducted the great-grandchildren of Noah from the Tower of Babel to the extremities of the globe. Of these judicious critics, one of the most entertaining was Olaus Rudbeck, professor in the university of Upsal.[16] Whatever is celebrated either in history or fable, this zealous patriot ascribes to his country. From Sweden (which formed so considerable a part of ancient Germany) the Greeks themselves derived their alphabetical characters, their astronomy, and their religion. Of that delightful region (for such it appeared to the eyes of a native) the Atlantis of Plato, the country of the Hyperboreans, the gardens of the Hesperides, the Fortunate Islands, and even the Elysian Fields, were all but faint and imperfect transcripts. A clime so profusely favoured by Nature could not long remain desert after the flood. The learned Rudbeck allows the family of Noah a few years to multiply from eight to about twenty thousand persons. He then disperses them into small colonies to replenish the earth, and to propagate the human species. The German or Swedish detachment (which marched, if I am not mistaken, under the command of Askenaz the son of Gomer, the son of Japhet) distinguished itself by a more than common diligence in the prosecution of this great work. The northern hive cast its swarms over the greatest part of Europe, Africa, and Asia; and (to use the author's metaphor) the blood circulated back from the extremities to the heart.

Fables and conjectures

[14] According to Dr. Keating (History of Ireland, p. 13, 14), the giant Partholanus, who was the son of Seara, the son of Esra, the son of Sru, the son of Framant, the son of Fathaclan, the son of Magog, the son of Japhet, the son of Noah, landed on the coast of Munster, the 14th day of May, in the year of the world one thousand nine hundred and seventy-eight. Though he succeeded in his great enterprise, the loose behaviour of his wife rendered his domestic life very unhappy, and provoked him to such a degree, that he killed —— her favourite greyhound. This, as the learned historian very properly observes, was the *first* instance of female falsehood and infidelity ever known in Ireland.

[15] Genealogical History of the Tartars by Abulghazi Bahadur Khan.

[16] His work, entitled Atlantica, is uncommonly scarce. Bayle has given two most curious extracts from it. République des Lettres, Janvier et Février, 1685.

The Germans ignorant of letters

But all this well-laboured system of German antiquities is annihilated by a single fact, too well attested to admit of any doubt, and of too decisive a nature to leave room for any reply. The Germans, in the age of Tacitus, were unacquainted with the use of letters;[17] and the use of letters is the principal circumstance that distinguishes a civilized people from a herd of savages, incapable of knowledge or reflection. Without that artificial help the human memory soon dissipates or corrupts the ideas intrusted to her charge; and the nobler faculties of the mind, no longer supplied with models or with materials, gradually forget their powers: the judgment becomes feeble and lethargic, the imagination languid or irregular. Fully to apprehend this important truth, let us attempt, in an improved society, to calculate the immense distance between the man of learning and the *illiterate* peasant. The former, by reading and reflection, multiplies his own experience, and lives in distant ages and remote countries; whilst the latter, rooted to a single spot, and confined to a few years of existence, surpasses but very little his fellow-labourer the ox in the exercise of his mental faculties. The same and even a greater difference will be found between nations than between individuals; and we may safely pronounce, that without some species of writing no people has ever preserved the faithful annals of their history, ever made any considerable progress in the abstract sciences, or ever possessed, in any tolerable degree of perfection, the useful and agreeable arts of life.

of arts and agriculture

Of these arts the ancient Germans were wretchedly destitute. They passed their lives in a state of ignorance and poverty, which it has pleased some declaimers to dignify with the appellation of virtuous simplicity. Modern Germany is said to

[17] Tacit. Germ. ii. 19. Literarum secreta viri pariter ac fœminæ ignorant. We may rest contented with this decisive authority, without entering into the obscure disputes concerning the antiquity of the Runic characters. The learned Celsius, a Swede, a scholar and a philosopher, was of opinion, that they were nothing more than the Roman letters, with the curves changed into straight lines for the ease of engraving. See Pelloutier, Histoire des Celtes, l. ii. c. 11. Dictionnaire Diplomatique, tom. i. p. 223. We may add, that the oldest Runic inscriptions are supposed to be of the third century, and the most ancient writer who mentions the Runic characters, is Venantius Fortunatus (Carm. vii. 18), who lived towards the end of the sixth century.

Barbara fraxineis pingatur RUNA tabellis. [See Zacher, Das Gothische Alphabet Vulfilas und das Runenalphabet; Mr. Isaac Taylor, Greeks and Goths; Stephen's Runic Monuments. Mr. Taylor's theory that the Runic alphabet was originally derived from the Greeks by the trade route, which existed at a very early age between the Euxine and the Baltic, is gaining ground. It was certainly developed in Scandinavia, not in Germany. The number of Runic inscriptions found in Germany is very small.]

contain about two thousand three hundred walled towns.[18] In a much wider extent of country the geographer Ptolemy could discover no more than ninety places which he decorates with the name of cities;[19] though, according to our ideas, they would but ill deserve that splendid title. We can only suppose them to have been rude fortifications, constructed in the centre of the woods, and designed to secure the women, children, and cattle, whilst the warriors of the tribe marched out to repel a sudden invasion.[20] But Tacitus asserts, as a well-known fact, that the Germans, in his time, had *no* cities;[21] and that they affected to despise the works of Roman industry as places of confinement rather than of security.[22] Their edifices were not even contiguous, or formed into regular villas;[23] each barbarian fixed his independent dwelling on the spot to which a plain, a wood, or a stream of fresh water, had induced him to give the preference. Neither stone, nor brick, nor tiles, were employed in these slight habitations.[24] They were indeed no more than low huts of a circular figure, built of rough timber, thatched with straw, and pierced at the top to leave a free passage for the smoke. In the most inclement winter, the hardy German was satisfied with a scanty garment made of the skin of some animal. The nations who dwelt towards the North clothed themselves in furs; and the women manufactured for their own use a coarse kind of linen.[25] The game of various sorts with which the forests of Germany were plentifully stocked supplied its inhabitants with food and exercise.[26] Their monstrous herds of cattle, less remarkable indeed for their beauty than for their utility,[27] formed the principal object of their wealth. A small quantity of corn was the only produce exacted from the earth: the

[18] Recherches Philosophiques sur les Américains, tom. iii. p. 228. The author of that very curious work is, if I am not misinformed, a German by birth. [De Pauw.]

[19] The Alexandrian Geographer is often criticized by the accurate Cluverius.

[20] See Cæsar, and the learned Mr. Whitaker in his History of Manchester, vol. i.

[21] Tacit. Germ. 16.

[22] When the Germans commanded the Ubii of Cologne to cast off the Roman yoke, and with their new freedom to resume their ancient manners, they insisted on the immediate demolition of the walls of the colony. "Postulamus a vobis, muros coloniæ, munimenta servitii, detrahatis; etiam fera animalia, si clausa teneas, virtutis obliviscuntur." Tacit. Hist. iv. 64.

[23] The straggling villages of Silesia are several miles in length. See Cluver. l. i. c. 13.

[24] One hundred and forty years after Tacitus a few more regular structures were erected near the Rhine and Danube. Herodian l. vii. p. 234.

[25] Tacit. Germ. 17.

[26] Tacit. Germ. 5.

[27] Cæsar de Bell. Gall. vi. 21.

use of orchards or artificial meadows was unknown to the Germans; nor can we expect any improvements in agriculture from a people whose property every year experienced a general change by a new division of the arable lands, and who, in that strange operation, avoided disputes by suffering a great part of their territory to lie waste and without tillage.[28]

and of the use of metals

Gold, silver, and iron were extremely scarce in Germany. Its barbarous inhabitants wanted both skill and patience to investigate those rich veins of silver, which have so liberally rewarded the attention of the princes of Brunswick and Saxony. Sweden, which now supplies Europe with iron, was equally ignorant of its own riches; and the appearance of the arms of the Germans furnished a sufficient proof how little iron they were able to bestow on what they must have deemed the noblest use of that metal. The various transactions of peace and war had introduced some Roman coins (chiefly silver) among the borderers of the Rhine and Danube; but the more distant tribes were absolutely unacquainted with the use of money, carried on their confined traffic by the exchange of commodities, and prized their rude earthen vessels as of equal value with the silver vases, the presents of Rome to their princes and ambassadors.[29] To a mind capable of reflection such leading facts convey more instruction than a tedious detail of subordinate circumstances. The value of money has been settled by general consent to express our wants and our property, as letters were invented to express our ideas; and both these institutions, by giving more active energy to the powers and passions of human nature, have contributed to multiply the objects they were designed to represent. The use of gold and silver is in a great measure factitious; but it would be impossible to enumerate the important and various services which agriculture, and all the arts, have received from iron, when tempered and fashioned by the operation of fire and the dexterous hand of man. Money, in a word, is the most universal incitement, iron the most powerful instrument, of human industry; and it is very difficult to conceive by what means a people, neither actuated by the one nor seconded by the other, could emerge from the grossest barbarism.[30]

[28] Tacit. Germ. 26. Cæsar, vi. 22.

[29] Tacit. Germ. 5.

[30] It is said that the Mexicans and Peruvians, without the use of either money or iron, had made a very great progress in the arts. Those arts, and the monuments they produced, have been strangely magnified. See Recherches sur les Américains, tom. ii. p. 153, &c.

Their indolence

If we contemplate a savage nation in any part of the globe, a supine indolence and a carelessness of futurity will be found to constitute their general character. In a civilized state every faculty of man is expanded and exercised; and the great chain of mutual dependence connects and embraces the several members of society. The most numerous portion of it is employed in constant and useful labour. The select few, placed by fortune above that necessity, can, however, fill up their time by the pursuits of interest or glory, by the improvement of their estate or of their understanding, by the duties, the pleasures, and even the follies, of social life. The Germans were not possessed of these varied resources. The care of the house and family, the management of the land and cattle, were delegated to the old and the infirm, to women and slaves. The lazy warrior, destitute of every art that might employ his leisure hours, consumed his days and nights in the animal gratifications of sleep and food. And yet, by a wonderful diversity of nature (according to the remark of a writer who had pierced into its darkest recesses), the same barbarians are by turns the most indolent and the most restless of mankind. They delight in sloth, they detest tranquillity.[31] The languid soul, oppressed with its own weight, anxiously required some new and powerful sensation; and war and danger were the only amusements adequate to its fierce temper. The sound that summoned the German to arms was grateful to his ear. It roused him from his uncomfortable lethargy, gave him an active pursuit, and, by strong exercise of the body, and violent emotions of the mind, restored him to a more lively sense of his existence. In the dull intervals of peace these barbarians were immoderately addicted to deep gaming and excessive drinking; both of which, by different means, the one by inflaming their passions, the other by extinguishing their reason, alike relieved them from the pain of thinking. They gloried in passing whole days and nights at table; and the blood of friends and relations often stained their numerous and drunken assemblies.[32] Their debts of honour (for in that light they have transmitted to us those of play) they discharged with the most romantic fidelity. The desperate gamester, who had staked his person and liberty on a last throw of the dice, patiently submitted to the decision of fortune, and suffered himself to be bound, chastised, and sold into remote slavery, by his weaker but more lucky antagonist.[33]

[31] Tacit. Germ. 15. [32] Tacit. Germ. 22, 23.

[33] Tacit. Germ. 24. The Germans might borrow the *arts* of play from the Romans, but the *passion* is wonderfully inherent in the human species.

Their taste for strong liquors

Strong beer, a liquor extracted with very little art from wheat or barley, and *corrupted* (as it is strongly expressed by Tacitus) into a certain semblance of wine, was sufficient for the gross purposes of German debauchery. But those who had tasted the rich wines of Italy, and afterwards of Gaul, sighed for that more delicious species of intoxication. They attempted not, however (as has since been executed with so much success), to naturalize the vine on the banks of the Rhine and Danube; nor did they endeavour to procure by industry the materials of an advantageous commerce. To solicit by labour what might be ravished by arms was esteemed unworthy of the German spirit.[34] The intemperate thirst of strong liquors often urged the barbarians to invade the provinces on which art or nature had bestowed those much envied presents. The Tuscan who betrayed his country to the Celtic nations attracted them into Italy by the prospect of the rich fruits and delicious wines, the productions of a happier climate.[35] And in the same manner the German auxiliaries, invited into France during the civil wars of the sixteenth century, were allured by the promise of plenteous quarters in the provinces of Champagne and Burgundy.[36] Drunkenness, the most illiberal, but not the most dangerous of *our* vices, was sometimes capable, in a less civilized state of mankind, of occasioning a battle, a war, or a revolution.

State of population

The climate of ancient Germany has been mollified, and the soil fertilized, by the labour of ten centuries from the time of Charlemagne. The same extent of ground, which at present maintains, in ease and plenty, a million of husbandmen and artificers, was unable to supply an hundred thousand lazy warriors with the simple necessaries of life.[37] The Germans abandoned their immense forests to the exercise of hunting, employed in pasturage the most considerable part of their lands, bestowed on the small remainder a rude and careless cultivation, and then accused the scantiness and sterility of a country that refused to maintain the multitude of its inhabitants. When the return of famine severely admonished them of the importance of the arts, the national distress was sometimes alleviated by the

[34] Tacit. Germ. 14. [35] Plutarch. in Camillo. T. Liv. v. 33.

[36] Dubos, Hist. de la Monarchie Françoise, tom. i. p. 193.

[37] The Helvetian nation, which issued from the country called Switzerland, contained, of every age and sex, 368,000 persons (Cæsar de Bell. Gall. i. 29). At present, the number of people in the Pays de Vaud (a small district on the banks of the Leman Lake, much more distinguished for politeness than for industry) amounts to 112,591. See an excellent Tract of M. Muret, in the Mémoires de la Société de Berne

emigration of a third, perhaps, or a fourth part of their youth.[38] The possession and the enjoyment of property are the pledges which bind a civilized people to an improved country. But the Germans, who carried with them what they most valued, their arms, their cattle, and their women, cheerfully abandoned the vast silence of their woods for the unbounded hopes of plunder and conquest. The innumerable swarms that issued, or seemed to issue, from the great storehouse of nations, were multiplied by the fears of the vanquished and by the credulity of succeeding ages. And from facts thus exaggerated, an opinion was gradually established, and has been supported by writers of distinguished reputation, that, in the age of Cæsar and Tacitus, the inhabitants of the North were far more numerous than they are in our days.[39] A more serious inquiry into the causes of population seems to have convinced modern philosophers of the falsehood, and indeed the impossibility, of the supposition. To the names of Mariana and of Machiavel[40] we can oppose the equal names of Robertson and Hume.[41]

German freedom

A warlike nation like the Germans, without either cities, letters, arts, or money, found some compensation for this savage state in the enjoyment of liberty. Their poverty secured their freedom, since our desires and our possessions are the strongest fetters of despotism. "Among the Suiones (says Tacitus) riches are held in honour. They are *therefore* subject to an absolute monarch, who instead of intrusting his people with the free use of arms, as is practised in the rest of Germany, commits them to the safe custody, not of a citizen, or even of a freedman, but of a slave. The neighbours of the Suiones, the Sitones, are sunk even below servitude; they obey a woman."[42] In the mention of these exceptions, the great historian sufficiently acknowledges the general theory of government. We are only at a loss to conceive by what means riches and despotism could penetrate into a remote corner of the North, and extinguish the generous flame that blazed with such fierceness on the frontier of the Roman provinces, or how the ancestors of those Danes and

[38] Paul Diaconus, c. 1, 2, 3. Machiavel, Davila, and the rest of Paul's followers, represent these emigrations too much as regular and concerted measures.

[39] Sir William Temple and Montesquieu have indulged, on this subject, the usual liveliness of their fancy.

[40] Machiavel, Hist. di Firenze, l. i. Mariana, Hist. Hispan. l. v. c. 1.

[41] Robertson's Cha. V. Hume's Politic. Ess.

[42] Tacit. Germ. 44, 45. Freinshemius (who dedicated his supplement to Livy, to Christina of Sweden) thinks proper to be very angry with the Roman who expressed so very little reverence for Northern queens.

Norwegians, so distinguished in later ages by their unconquered spirit, could thus tamely resign the great character of German liberty.[43] Some tribes, however, on the coast of the Baltic, acknowledged the authority of kings, though without relinquishing the rights of men;[44] but in the far greater part of Germany the form of government was a democracy, tempered, indeed, and controlled, not so much by general and positive laws as by the occasional ascendant of birth or valour, of eloquence or superstition.[45]

Assemblies of the people

Civil governments, in their first institutions, are voluntary associations for mutual defence. To obtain the desired end it is absolutely necessary that each individual should conceive himself obliged to submit his private opinion and actions to the judgment of the greater number of his associates. The German tribes were contented with this rude but liberal outline of political society. As soon as a youth, born of free parents, had attained the age of manhood, he was introduced into the general council of his countrymen, solemnly invested with a shield and spear, and adopted as an equal and worthy member of the military commonwealth. The assembly of the warriors of the tribe was convened at stated seasons, or on sudden emergencies. The trial of public offences, the election of magistrates, and the great business of peace and war, were determined by its independent voice. Sometimes, indeed, these important questions were previously considered and prepared in a more select council of the principal chieftains.[46] The magistrates might deliberate and persuade, the people only could resolve and execute; and the resolutions of the Germans were for the most part hasty and violent. Barbarians accustomed to place their freedom in gratifying the present passion, and their courage in overlooking

[43] May we not suspect that superstition was the parent of despotism? The descendants of Odin (whose race was not extinct till the year 1060) are said to have reigned in Sweden above a thousand years. The temple of Upsal was the ancient seat of religion and empire. In the year 1153 I find a singular law prohibiting the use and possession of arms to any, except the king's guards. Is it not probable that it was coloured by the pretence of reviving an old institution? See Dalin's History of Sweden in the Bibliothèque Raisonnée, tom. xl. and xlv.

[44] Tacit. Germ. c. 43. [The Gotones, that is, the Goths, who in the time of Tacitus lived on the right bank of the lower Vistula; but in the third century we find them on the Black Sea. Pliny also mentions the Guttones, Nat. Hist. iv. 14.]

[45] Id. c. 11, 12, 13, &c.

[46] Grotius changes an expression of Tacitus, *pertractantur* into *prætractantur*. The correction is equally just and ingenious. [*Germ.* 11. *apud principes pertractentur*. No change is necessary; *pertractentur* means "be thoroughly discussed". But the general meaning is the same.]

all future consequences, turned away with indignant contempt from the remonstrances of justice and policy, and it was the practice to signify by a hollow murmur their dislike of such timid councils. But, whenever a more popular orator proposed to vindicate the meanest citizen, from either foreign or domestic injury, whenever he called upon his fellow-countrymen to assert the national honour, or to pursue some enterprise full of danger and glory, a loud clashing of shields and spears expressed the eager applause of the assembly. For the Germans always met in arms, and it was constantly to be dreaded lest an irregular multitude, inflamed with faction and strong liquors, should use those arms to enforce, as well as to declare, their furious resolves. We may recollect how often the diets of Poland have been polluted with blood, and the more numerous party has been compelled to yield to the more violent and seditious.[47]

Authority of the princes and magistrates

A general of the tribe was elected on occasions of danger; and, if the danger was pressing and extensive, several tribes concurred in the choice of the same general. The bravest warrior was named to lead his countrymen into the field, by his example rather than by his commands. But this power, however limited, was still invidious. It expired with the war, and in time of peace, the German tribes acknowledged not any supreme chief.[48] *Princes* were, however, appointed, in the general assembly, to administer justice, or rather to compose differences,[49] in their respective districts. In the choice of these magistrates as much regard was shown to birth as to merit.[50] To each was assigned, by the public, a guard, and a council of an hundred persons, and the first of the princes appears to have enjoyed a pre-eminence of rank and honour which sometimes tempted the Romans to compliment him with the regal title.[51]

more absolute over the property than over the persons of the Germans

The comparative view of the powers of the magistrates, in two remarkable instances, is alone sufficient to represent the whole system of German manners. The disposal of the landed property within their district was absolutely vested in their hands, and they distributed it every year according to a new division.[52] At the same time they were not authorized to punish with death, to

[47] Even in *our* ancient parliament, the barons often carried a question not so much by the number of votes as by that of their armed followers.
[48] Cæsar de Bell. Gall. vi. 23.
[49] Minuunt controversias, is a very happy expression of Cæsar's.
[50] Reges ex nobilitate, duces ex virtute sumunt. Tacit. Germ. 7.
[51] Cluver. Germ. Ant. l. i. c. 38.
[52] Cæsar, vi. 22. Tacit. Germ. 26.

imprison, or even to strike a private citizen.[53] A people thus jealous of their persons, and careless of their possessions, must have been totally destitute of industry and the arts, but animated with a high sense of honour and independence.

Voluntary engagements

The Germans respected only those duties which they imposed on themselves. The most obscure soldier resisted with disdain the authority of the magistrates. "The noblest youths blushed not to be numbered among the faithful companions of some renowned chief, to whom they devoted their arms and service. A noble emulation prevailed among the companions to obtain the first place in the esteem of their chief; amongst the chiefs, to acquire the greatest number of valiant companions. To be ever surrounded by a band of select youths was the pride and strength of the chiefs, their ornament in peace, their defence in war. The glory of such distinguished heroes diffused itself beyond the narrow limits of their own tribe. Presents and embassies solicited their friendship, and the fame of their arms often ensured victory to the party which they espoused. In the hour of danger it was shameful for the chief to be surpassed in valour by his companions; shameful for the companions not to equal the valour of their chief. To survive his fall in battle was indelible infamy. To protect his person, and to adorn his glory with the trophies of their own exploits, were the most sacred of their duties. The chiefs combated for victory, the companions for the chief. The noblest warriors, whenever their native country was sunk in the laziness of peace, maintained their numerous bands in some distant scene of action, to exercise their restless spirit, and to acquire renown by voluntary dangers. Gifts worthy of soldiers, the warlike steed, the bloody and ever victorious lance, were the rewards which the companions claimed from the liberality of their chief. The rude plenty of his hospitable board was the only pay that *he* could bestow, or *they* would accept. War, rapine, and the free-will offerings of his friends, supplied the materials of this munificence."[54] This institution, however it might accidentally weaken the several republics, invigorated the general character of the Germans, and even ripened amongst them all the virtues of which barbarians are susceptible—the faith and valour, the hospitality and the courtesy, so conspicuous long afterwards in the ages of chivalry. The honourable gifts, bestowed by the chief on his brave companions, have been supposed, by an ingenious writer,

[53] Tacit. Germ. 7. [54] Tacit. Germ. 13, 14.

to contain the first rudiments of the fiefs, distributed after the conquest of the Roman provinces, by the barbarian lords among their vassals, with a similar duty of homage and military service.[55] These conditions, are, however, very repugnant to the maxims of the ancient Germans, who delighted in mutual presents, but without either imposing or accepting the weight of obligations.[56]

German chastity

"In the days of chivalry, or more properly of romance, all the men were brave, and all the women were chaste;" and, notwithstanding the latter of these virtues is acquired and preserved with much more difficulty than the former, it is ascribed, almost without exception, to the wives of the ancient Germans. Polygamy was not in use, except among the princes, and among them only for the sake of multiplying their alliances. Divorces were prohibited by manners rather than by laws. Adulteries were punished as rare and inexpiable crimes; nor was seduction justified by example and fashion.[57] We may easily discover that Tacitus indulges an honest pleasure in the contrast of barbarian virtue with the dissolute conduct of the Roman ladies: yet there are some striking circumstances that give an air of truth, or at least of probability, to the conjugal faith and chastity of the Germans.

Its probable causes

Although the progress of civilization has undoubtedly contributed to assuage the fiercer passions of human nature, it seems to have been less favourable to the virtue of chastity, whose most dangerous enemy is the softness of the mind. The refinements of life corrupt while they polish the intercourse of the sexes. The gross appetite of love becomes most dangerous, when it is elevated, or rather, indeed, disguised, by sentimental passion. The elegance of dress, of motion, and of manners, gives a lustre to beauty, and inflames the senses through the imagination. Luxurious entertainments, midnight dances, and licentious spectacles, present at once temptation and opportunity to female frailty.[58] From such dangers the unpolished wives of the barbarians were secured by poverty, solitude, and the painful

[55] Esprit des Loix, l. xxx. c. 3. The brilliant imagination of Montesquieu is corrected, however, by the dry cold reason of the Abbé de Mably. Observations sur l'Histoire de France, tom. i. p. 356.

[56] Gaudent muneribus, sed nec data imputant, nec acceptis obligantur. Tacit. Germ. c. 21.

[57] The adulteress was whipped through the village. Neither wealth nor beauty could inspire compassion, or procure her a second husband. [Tacit. Germ.] 18, 19.

[58] Ovid employs two hundred lines in the research of places the most favourable to love. Above all he considers the theatre as the best adapted to collect the beauties of Rome, and to melt them into tenderness and sensuality.

cares of a domestic life. The German huts, open on every side to the eye of indiscretion or jealousy, were a better safeguard of conjugal fidelity than the walls, the bolts, and the eunuchs of a Persian haram. To this reason another may be added of a more honourable nature. The Germans treated their women with esteem and confidence, consulted them on every occasion of importance, and fondly believed that in their breasts resided a sanctity and wisdom more than human. Some of these interpreters of fate, such as Velleda, in the Batavian war, governed, in the name of the deity, the fiercest nations of Germany.[59] The rest of the sex, without being adored as goddesses, were respected as the free and equal companions of soldiers; associated even by the marriage ceremony to a life of toil, of danger, and of glory.[60] In their great invasions, the camps of the barbarians were filled with a multitude of women, who remained firm and undaunted amidst the sound of arms, the various forms of destruction, and the honourable wounds of their sons and husbands.[61] Fainting armies of Germans have more than once been driven back upon the enemy by the generous despair of the women, who dreaded death much less than servitude. If the day was irrecoverably lost, they well knew how to deliver themselves and their children, with their own hands, from an insulting victor.[62] Heroines of such a cast may claim our admiration; but they were most assuredly neither lovely nor very susceptible of love. Whilst they affected to emulate the stern virtues of *man*, they must have resigned that attractive softness in which principally consist the charm and weakness of *woman*. Conscious pride taught the German females to suppress every tender emotion that stood in competition with honour, and the first honour of the sex has ever been that of chastity. The sentiments and conduct of these high-spirited matrons may, at once, be considered as a cause, as an effect, and as a proof, of the general character of the nation. Female courage, however it may be raised by fanaticism, or confirmed by habit, can be only a faint and imperfect imitation of the manly valour that distinguishes the age or country in which it may be found.

[59] Tacit. Hist. iv. 61, 65.

[60] The marriage present was a yoke of oxen, horses, and arms. See Germ. c. 18. Tacitus is somewhat too florid on the subject.

[61] The change of *exigere* into *exugere* is a most excellent correction [c. 7. *Exugere plagas* would hardly be possible. *Exigere plagas* is right, "to examine, probe the wounds".]

[62] Tacit. Germ. c. 7. Plutarch. in Mario. Before the wives of the Teutones destroyed themselves and their children, they had offered to surrender, on condition that they should be received as the slaves of the vestal virgins.

Religion

The religious system of the Germans (if the wild opinions of savages can deserve that name) was dictated by their wants, their fears, and their ignorance.[63] They adored the great visible objects and agents of Nature, the Sun and the Moon, the Fire and the Earth; together with those imaginary deities who were supposed to preside over the most important occupations of human life. They were persuaded that, by some ridiculous arts of divination, they could discover the will of the superior beings, and that human sacrifices were the most precious and acceptable offering to their altars. Some applause has been hastily bestowed on the sublime notion entertained by that people of the Deity whom they neither confined within the walls of a temple, nor represented by any human figure; but when we recollect that the Germans were unskilled in architecture, and totally unacquainted with the art of sculpture, we shall readily assign the true reason of a scruple, which arose not so much from a superiority of reason as from a want of ingenuity. The only temples in Germany were dark and ancient groves, consecrated by the reverence of succeeding generations. Their secret gloom, the imagined residence of an invisible power, by presenting no distinct object of fear or worship, impressed the mind with a still deeper sense of religious horror;[64] and the priests, rude and illiterate as they were, had been taught by experience the use of every artifice that could preserve and fortify impressions so well suited to their own interest.

Its effects in peace

The same ignorance which renders barbarians incapable of conceiving or embracing the useful restraints of laws exposes them naked and unarmed to the blind terrors of superstition. The German priests, improving this favourable temper of their countrymen, had assumed a jurisdiction even in temporal concerns which the magistrate could not venture to exercise; and the haughty warrior patiently submitted to the lash of correction, when it was inflicted, not by any human power, but by the immediate order of the god of war.[65] The defects of civil policy were sometimes supplied by the interposition of ecclesiastical authority. The latter was constantly exerted to maintain silence and decency in the popular assemblies; and

[63] Tacitus has employed a few lines, and Cluverius one hundred and twenty-four pages, on this obscure subject. The former discovers in Germany the gods of Greece and Rome. The latter is positive that, under the emblems of the sun, the moon, and the fire, his pious ancestors worshipped the Trinity in unity.

[64] The sacred wood, described with such sublime horror by Lucan, was in the neighbourhood of Marseilles; but there were many of the same kind in Germany.

[65] Tacit. Germania, c. 7.

was sometimes extended to a more enlarged concern for the national welfare. A solemn procession was occasionally celebrated in the present countries of Mecklenburgh and Pomerania. The unknown symbol of the *Earth*, covered with a thick veil, was placed on a carriage drawn by cows; and in this manner the goddess, whose common residence was in the isle of Rugen, visited several adjacent tribes of her worshippers. During her progress, the sound of war was hushed, quarrels were suspended, arms laid aside, and the restless Germans had an opportunity of tasting the blessings of peace and harmony.[66] The *truce of God*, so often and so ineffectually proclaimed by the clergy of the eleventh century, was an obvious imitation of this ancient custom.[67]

In war

But the influence of religion was far more powerful to inflame than to moderate the fierce passions of the Germans. Interest and fanaticism often prompted its ministers to sanctify the most daring and the most unjust enterprises, by the approbation of Heaven, and full assurances of success. The consecrated standards, long revered in the groves of superstition, were placed in the front of the battle;[68] and the hostile army was devoted with dire execrations to the gods of war and of thunder.[69] In the faith of soldiers (and such were the Germans) cowardice is the most unpardonable of sins. A brave man was the worthy favourite of their martial deities; the wretch who had lost his shield was alike banished from the religious and the civil assemblies of his countrymen. Some tribes of the north seem to have embraced the doctrine of transmigration,[70] others imagined a gross paradise of immortal drunkenness.[71] All agreed that a life spent in arms, and a glorious death in battle, were the best preparations for a happy futurity, either in this or in another world.

The bards

The immortality so vainly promised by the priests was, in some degree, conferred by the bards. That singular order of men has most deservedly attracted the notice of all who have attempted to investigate the antiquities of the Celts, the Scandi-

[66] Tacit. Germania, c. 40.

[67] See Dr. Robertson's History of Charles V. vol. i. note 10.

[68] Tacit. Germ. c. 7. These standards were only the heads of wild beasts.

[69] See an instance of this custom, Tacit. Annal. xiii. 57.

[70] Cæsar, Diodorus, and Lucan, seem to ascribe this doctrine to the Gauls, but M. Pelloutier (Histoire des Celtes, l. iii. c. 18) labours to reduce their expressions to a more orthodox sense.

[71] Concerning this gross but alluring doctrine of the Edda, see Fable xx. in the curious version of that book, published by M. Mallet, in his Introduction to the History of Denmark.

navians, and the Germans. Their genius and character, as well as the reverence paid to that important office, have been sufficiently illustrated. But we cannot so easily express, or even conceive, the enthusiasm of arms and glory which they kindled in the breast of their audience. Among a polished people, a taste for poetry is rather an amusement of the fancy than a passion of the soul. And yet, when in calm retirement we peruse the combats described by Homer or Tasso, we are insensibly seduced by the fiction, and feel a momentary glow of martial ardour. But how faint, how cold is the sensation which a peaceful mind can receive from solitary study! It was in the hour of battle, or in the feast of victory, that the bards celebrated the glory of heroes of ancient days, the ancestors of those warlike chieftains who listened with transport to their artless but animated strains. The view of arms and of danger heightened the effect of the military song; and the passions which it tended to excite, the desire of fame and the contempt of death, were the habitual sentiments of a German mind.[72]

Causes which checked the progress of the Germans

Such was the situation and such were the manners of the ancient Germans. Their climate, their want of learning, of arts, and of laws, their notions of honour, of gallantry, and of religion, their sense of freedom, impatience of peace, and thirst of enterprise, all contributed to form a people of military heroes. And yet we find that, during more than two hundred and fifty years that elapsed from the defeat of Varus to the reign of Decius, these formidable barbarians made few considerable attempts, and not any material impression, on the luxurious and enslaved provinces of the empire. Their progress was checked by their want of arms and discipline, and their fury was diverted by the intestine divisions of ancient Germany.

Want of arms

I. It has been observed, with ingenuity, and not without truth, that the command of iron soon gives a nation the command of gold. But the rude tribes of Germany, alike destitute of both those valuable metals, were reduced slowly to acquire, by their unassisted strength, the possession of the one as well as the other. The face of a German army displayed their poverty of iron. Swords and the longer kind of lances they could seldom use. Their *frameæ* (as they called them in their

[72] See Tacit. Germ. c. 3. Diodor. Sicul. l. v. [29]. Strabo, l. iv. p. 197. The classical reader may remember the rank of Demodocus in the Phæacian court, and the ardour infused by Tyrtæus into the fainting Spartans. Yet there is little probability that the Greeks and the Germans were the same people. Much learned trifling might be spared, if our antiquarians would condescend to reflect that similar manners will naturally be produced by similar situations.

own language) were long spears headed with a sharp but narrow iron point, and which, as occasion required, they either darted from a distance, or pushed in close onset. With this spear and with a shield their cavalry was contented. A multitude of darts, scattered[73] with incredible force, were an additional resource of the infantry. Their military dress, when they wore any, was nothing more than a loose mantle. A variety of colours was the only ornament of their wooden or their osier shields. Few of the chiefs were distinguished by cuirasses, scarce any by helmets. Though the horses of Germany were neither beautiful, swift, nor practised in the skilful evolutions of the Roman manage, several of the nations obtained renown by their cavalry; but, in general, the principal strength of the Germans consisted in their infantry,[74] which was drawn up in several deep columns, according to the distinction of tribes and families. Impatient of fatigue or delay, these half-armed warriors rushed to battle with dissonant shouts and disordered ranks; and sometimes, by the effort of native valour, prevailed over the constrained and more artificial bravery of the Roman mercenaries. But as the barbarians poured forth their whole souls on the first onset, they knew not how to rally or to retire. A repulse was a sure defeat; and a defeat was most commonly total destruction. When we recollect the complete armour of the Roman soldiers, their discipline, exercises, evolutions, fortified camps, and military engines, it appears a just matter of surprise how the naked and unassisted valour of the barbarians could dare to encounter in the field the strength of the legions and the various troops of the auxiliaries, which seconded their operations. The contest was too unequal, till the introduction of luxury had enervated the vigour, and a spirit of disobedience and sedition had relaxed the discipline, of the Roman armies. The introduction of barbarian auxiliaries into those armies was a measure attended with very obvious dangers, as it might gradually instruct the Germans in the arts of war and of policy. Although they were admitted in small numbers and with the strictest precaution, the example of Civilis was proper to convince the Romans that the danger was not imaginary, and that their precautions were not always sufficient.[75] During the

and of discipline

[73] Missilia spargunt, Tacit. Germ. c. 6. Either that historian used a vague expression, or he meant that they were thrown at random.

[74] It was the principal distinction from the Sarmatians, who generally fought on horseback.

[75] The relation of this enterprise occupies a great part of the fourth and fifth books of the History of Tacitus, and is more remarkable for its eloquence than perspicuity. Sir Henry Saville has observed several inaccuracies.

civil wars that followed the death of Nero, that artful and intrepid Batavian, whom his enemies condescended to compare with Hannibal and Sertorius,[76] formed a great design of freedom and ambition. Eight Batavian cohorts, renowned in the wars of Britain and Italy, repaired to his standard. He introduced an army of Germans into Gaul, prevailed on the powerful cities of Treves and Langres to embrace his cause, defeated the legions, destroyed their fortified camps, and employed against the Romans the military knowledge which he had acquired in their service. When at length, after an obstinate struggle, he yielded to the power of the empire, Civilis secured himself and his country by an honourable treaty. The Batavians still continued to occupy the islands of the Rhine,[77] the allies, not the servants, of the Roman monarchy.

Civil dissensions of Germany

II. The strength of ancient Germany appears formidable when we consider the effects that might have been produced by its united effort. The wide extent of country might very possibly contain a million of warriors, as all who were of an age to bear arms were of a temper to use them. But this fierce multitude, incapable of concerting or executing any plan of national greatness, was agitated by various and often hostile intentions. Germany was divided into more than forty independent states; and even in each state the union of the several tribes was extremely loose and precarious. The barbarians were easily provoked; they knew not how to forgive an injury, much less an insult; their resentments were bloody and implacable. The casual disputes that so frequently happened in their tumultuous parties of hunting or drinking were sufficient to inflame the minds of whole nations; the private feud of any considerable chieftains diffused itself among their followers and allies. To chastise the insolent, or to plunder the defenceless, were alike causes of war. The most formidable states of Germany affected to encompass their territories with a wide frontier of solitude and devastation. The awful distance preserved by their neighbours attested the terror of their arms, and in some measure defended them from the danger of unexpected incursions.[78]

Fomented by the policy of Rome

"The Bructeri (it is Tacitus who now speaks) were totally exterminated by the neighbouring tribes,[79] provoked by their

[76] Tacit. Hist. iv. 13. Like them, he had lost an eye.

[77] It was contained between the two branches of the old Rhine, as they subsisted before the face of the country was changed by art and nature. See Cluver. German. Antiq. l. iii. c. 30, 37.

[78] Cæsar de Bell. Gall. l. vi. 23.

[79] They are mentioned however in the ivth and vth centuries by Nazarius, Ammianus, Claudian, &c., as a tribe of Franks. See Cluver. Germ. Antiq. l. iii. c. 13.

insolence, allured by the hopes of spoil, and perhaps inspired by the tutelar deities of the empire. Above sixty thousand barbarians were destroyed, not by the Roman arms, but in our sight, and for our entertainment. May the nations, enemies of Rome, ever preserve this enmity to each other! We have now attained the utmost verge of prosperity,[80] and have nothing left to demand of fortune except the discord of the barbarians."[81] These sentiments, less worthy of the humanity than of the patriotism of Tacitus, express the invariable maxims of the policy of his countrymen. They deemed it a much safer expedient to divide than to combat the barbarians, from whose defeat they could derive neither honour nor advantage. The money and negotiations of Rome insinuated themselves into the heart of Germany, and every art of seduction was used with dignity to conciliate those nations whom their proximity to the Rhine or Danube might render the most useful friends as well as the most troublesome enemies. Chiefs of renown and power were flattered by the most trifling presents, which they received either as marks of distinction or as the instruments of luxury. In civil dissensions, the weaker faction endeavoured to strengthen its interest by entering into secret connexions with the governors of the frontier provinces. Every quarrel among the Germans was fomented by the intrigues of Rome; and every plan of union and public good was defeated by the stronger bias of private jealousy and interest.[82]

Transient union against Marcus Antoninus

The general conspiracy which terrified the Romans under the reign of Marcus Antoninus comprehended almost all the nations of Germany, and even Sarmatia, from the mouth of the Rhine to that of the Danube.[83] It is impossible for us to determine

[80] *Urgentibus* is the common reading, but good sense, Lipsius, and some MSS. declare for *Vergentibus*. [An unnecessary correction.]

[81] Tacit. Germania, c. 33. The pious Abbé de la Bléterie is very angry with Tacitus, talks of the devil who was a murderer from the beginning, &c., &c.

[82] Many traces of this policy may be discovered in Tacitus and Dion; and many more may be inferred from the principles of human nature.

[83] Hist. August. p. 31 [iv. 22]. Ammian. Marcellin. l. xxxi. c. 5. Aurel. Victor. [Cæs. 16]. The Emperor Marcus was reduced to sell the rich furniture of the palace, and to enlist slaves and robbers. [This war is generally called the Marcomannic, but its proper name, at first, was the *Bellum Germanicum*. At a later stage, when the Sarmatians made common cause with the Germans, it was called the *Bellum Germanicum Sarmaticum*. The Romans took the field in 167, and hostilities lasted, with a short interval of peace, till the accession of Commodus, 180. The following German peoples took part in it:—Marcomanni, Quadi, Narisci, Victovali, Hermunduri, Vandals, Buri; also the (Sarmatian) Jazyges, who dwelt between the Theiss and Danube. Large settlements of the conquered barbarians were made within the limits of the Empire, so that this period has importance for the history of the Roman *colonatus*. It has been well treated by Heisterbergk in his work, Die Entstehung des Colonats.]

whether this hasty confederation was formed by necessity, by reason, or by passion; but we may rest assured, that the barbarians were neither allured by the indolence or provoked by the ambition of the Roman monarch. This dangerous invasion required all the firmness and vigilance of Marcus. He fixed generals of ability in the several stations of attack, and assumed in person the conduct of the most important province on the Upper Danube. After a long and doubtful conflict, the spirit of the barbarians was subdued. The Quadi and the Marcomanni,[84] who had taken the lead in the war, were the most severely punished in its catastrophe. They were commanded to retire five miles[85] from their own banks of the Danube, and to deliver up the flower of the youth, who were immediately sent into Britain, a remote island, where they might be secure as hostages and useful as soldiers.[86] On the frequent rebellions of the Quadi and Marcomanni, the irritated emperor resolved to reduce their country into the form of a province.[87] His designs were disappointed by death. This formidable league, however, the only one that appears in the two first centuries of the Imperial history, was entirely dissipated without leaving any traces behind in Germany.

Distinction of the German tribes

In the course of this introductory chapter, we have confined ourselves to the general outlines of the manners of Germany, without attempting to describe or to distinguish the various tribes which filled that great country in the time of Cæsar, of Tacitus, or of Ptolemy.[88] As the ancient, or as new tribes successively present themselves in the series of this history, we shall concisely mention their origin, their situation, and their particular character. Modern nations are fixed and permanent societies, connected among themselves by laws and government, bound to their native soil by arts and agriculture. The German tribes were voluntary and fluctuating associations of soldiers, almost of savages. The same territory often changed its inhabitants in the tide of conquest and emigration. The same communities, uniting in a plan of defence or invasion, bestowed a

[84] The Marcomanni, a colony, who, from the banks of the Rhine, occupied Bohemia and Moravia, had once erected a great and formidable monarchy under their king Maroboduus. See Strabo, l. vii. [290]. Vell. Pat. ii. 105 [108]. Tacit. Annal. ii. 63.

[85] Mr. Wotton (History of Rome, p. 166) increases the prohibition to ten times the distance. His reasoning is specious but not conclusive. Five miles were sufficient for a fortified barrier.

[86] Dion, l. lxxi. [11 *et sqq.*] and lxxii. [2].

[87] [He intended to form two new provinces, Marcomannia and Sarmatia.]

[88] [For our authorities on early German History, see Appendix 15.]

new title on their new confederacy. The dissolution of an ancient confederacy restored to the independent tribes their peculiar but long forgotten appellation. A victorious state often communicated its own name to a vanquished people. Sometimes crowds of volunteers flocked from all parts to the standard of a favourite leader; his camp became their country, and some circumstance of the enterprise soon gave a common denomination to the mixed multitude. The distinctions of the ferocious invaders were perpetually varied by themselves, and confounded by the astonished subjects of the Roman empire.[89]

Numbers

Wars and the administration of public affairs are the principal subjects of history; but the number of persons interested in these busy scenes is very different, according to the different condition of mankind. In great monarchies millions of obedient subjects pursue their useful occupations in peace and obscurity. The attention of the writer, as well as of the reader, is solely confined to a court, a capital, a regular army, and the districts which happen to be the occasional scene of military operations. But a state of freedom and barbarism, the season of civil commotions, or the situation of petty republics,[90] raises almost every member of the community into action and consequently into notice. The irregular divisions and the restless motions of the people of Germany dazzle our imagination, and seem to multiply their numbers. The profuse enumeration of kings and warriors, of armies and nations, inclines us to forget that the same objects are continually repeated under a variety of appellations, and that the most splendid appellations have been frequently lavished on the most inconsiderable objects.

[89] See an excellent dissertation on the origin and migrations of nations, in the Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xviii. p. 48-71. It is seldom that the antiquarian and the philosopher are so happily blended.

[90] Should we suspect that Athens contained only 21,000 citizens, and Sparta no more than 39,000? See Hume and Wallace on the number of mankind in ancient and modern times. [See above, chap. ii. note 22.]

CHAPTER X

The Emperors Decius, Gallus, Æmilianus, Valerian, and Gallienus—The general Irruption of the Barbarians—The thirty Tyrants

The nature of the subject, A.D. 248-268

From the great secular games celebrated by Philip to the death of the emperor Gallienus, there elapsed twenty years of shame and misfortune. During that calamitous period, every instant of time was marked, every province of the Roman world was afflicted, by barbarous invaders and military tyrants, and the ruined empire seemed to approach the last and fatal moment of its dissolution. The confusion of the times and the scarcity of authentic memorials oppose equal difficulties to the historian, who attempts to preserve a clear and unbroken thread of narration.[1] Surrounded with imperfect fragments, always concise, often obscure, and sometimes contradictory, he is reduced to collect, to compare, and to conjecture: and though he ought never to place his conjectures in the rank of facts, yet the knowledge of human nature, and of the sure operation of its fierce and unrestrained passions, might, on some occasions, supply the want of historical materials.

The emperor Philip

There is not, for instance, any difficulty in conceiving that the successive murders of so many emperors had loosened all the ties of allegiance between the prince and people; that all the generals of Philip were disposed to imitate the example of their master; and that the caprice of armies, long since habituated to frequent and violent revolutions, might every day raise to the throne the most obscure of their fellow-soldiers. History can only add, that the rebellion against the emperor Philip broke out in the summer of the year two hundred and forty-nine, among the legions of Mæsia, and that a subaltern officer,[2] named Marinus, was the object of their seditious choice. Philip was

[1] [We have almost no sources for Philip's reign. Gibbon mentions no events during the years between his accession in 244 and the secular games in 248. An expedition led by Philip himself against the Carpi seems to have been the most important occurrence.]

[2] The expression used by Zosimus [i. 20] and Zonaras [xii. 19] may signify that Marinus commanded a century, a cohort, or a legion.

alarmed. He dreaded lest the treason of the Mæsian army should prove the first spark of a general conflagration. Distracted with the consciousness of his guilt and of his danger, he communicated the intelligence to the senate. A gloomy silence prevailed, the effect of fear, and perhaps of disaffection, till at length Decius, one of the assembly, assuming a spirit worthy of his noble extraction, ventured to discover more intrepidity than the emperor seemed to possess. He treated the whole business with contempt, as a hasty and inconsiderate tumult, and Philip's rival as a phantom of royalty, who in a very few days would be destroyed by the same inconstancy that had created him. The speedy completion of the prophecy inspired Philip with a just esteem for so able a counsellor, and Decius appeared to him the only person capable of restoring peace and discipline to an army whose tumultuous spirit did not immediately subside after the murder of Marinus. Decius,[3] who long resisted his own nomination, seems to have insinuated the danger of presenting a leader of merit to the angry and apprehensive minds of the soldiers; and his prediction was again confirmed by the event. The legions of Mæsia forced their judge to become their accomplice. They left him only the alternative of death or the purple. His subsequent conduct, after that decisive measure, was unavoidable. He conducted or followed his army to the confines of Italy, whither Philip, collecting all his force to repel the formidable competitor whom he had raised up, advanced to meet him. The Imperial troops were superior in number; but the rebels formed an army of veterans, commanded by an able and experienced leader. Philip was either killed in the battle or put to death a few days afterwards at Verona. His son and associate in the empire,[4] was massacred at Rome by the Prætorian guards; and the victorious Decius, with more favourable circumstances than the ambition of that age can usually plead, was universally acknowledged by the senate and provinces. It is reported that, immediately after his reluctant acceptance of the title of Augustus, he had assured Philip by a private message of his innocence

Services, revolt, victory, and reign of the emperor Decius, A.D. 249

[3] His birth at Bubalia, a little village in Pannonia (Eutrop. ix. [4], Victor. in Cæsarib. [29] et Epitom. [29]), seems to contradict, unless it was merely accidental, his supposed descent from the Decii. Six hundred years had bestowed nobility on the Decii; but at the commencement of that period, they were only Plebeians of merit, and among the first who shared the consulship with the haughty Patricians. Plebeiæ Deciorum animæ, &c. Juvenal, Sat. viii. 254. See the spirited speech of Decius in Livy, x. 9, 10 [7, 8]. [C. Messius Quintus Traianus Decius. The date of his elevation fell in the last days of 248 (Schiller, i. 803).]

[4] [Also named Philip.]

and loyalty, solemnly protesting that, on his arrival in Italy, he would resign the Imperial ornaments, and return to the condition of an obedient subject. His professions might be sincere; but, in the situation where fortune had placed him, it was scarcely possible that he could either forgive or be forgiven.[5]

He marches against the Goths, A.D. 250

The emperor Decius had employed a few months in the works of peace[6] and the administration of justice, when he was summoned to the banks of the Danube by the invasion of the Goths. This is the first considerable occasion in which history mentions that great people, who afterwards broke the Roman power, sacked the Capitol, and reigned in Gaul, Spain, and Italy. So memorable was the part which they acted in the subversion of the Western empire, that the name of Goths is frequently but improperly used as a general appellation of rude and warlike barbarism.

Origin of the Goths from Scandinavia

In the beginning of the sixth century, and after the conquest of Italy, the Goths, in possession of present greatness, very naturally indulged themselves in the prospect of past and of future glory. They wished to preserve the memory of their ancestors, and to transmit to posterity their own achievements. The principal minister of the court of Ravenna, the learned Cassiodorus, gratified the inclination of the conquerors in a Gothic history, which consisted of twelve books, now reduced to the imperfect abridgment of Jornandes.[7] These writers passed with the most artful conciseness over the misfortunes of the nation, celebrated its successful valour, and adorned the triumph with many Asiatic trophies that more properly belonged to the people of Scythia. On the faith of ancient songs, the uncertain but the only memorials of barbarians, they deduced the first origin of the Goths from the vast island or peninsula of Scandinavia.[8] That extreme country of the North was not unknown to the conquerors of Italy; the ties of ancient consanguinity had been strengthened by recent offices of friendship; and a Scandinavian king had cheerfully abdicated his savage greatness, that he might pass the remainder of his days in the

[5] Zosimus, l. i. p. 20 [22]. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 624 [19]. Edit. Louvre.

[6] [He conferred the rank of Cæsar on his two sons, Q. Herennius Etruscus Messius Decius and C. Valens Hostilianus Messius Quintus.]

[7] See the prefaces of Cassiodorus and Jornandes: it is surprising that the latter should be omitted in the excellent edition, published by Grotius, of the Gothic writers. [Jordanes is now recognized as the correct spelling of the Gothic writer whom Gibbon calls Jornandes. See Appendix 15.]

[8] On the authority of Ablavius, Jornandes quotes some old Gothic chronicles in verse. De Reb. Geticis, c. 4. [The Scandinavian origin of the Goths was a legend believed by themselves, but there is no historical evidence for it.]

peaceful and polished court of Ravenna.[9] Many vestiges, which cannot be ascribed to the arts of popular vanity, attest the ancient residence of the Goths in the countries beyond the Baltic. From the time of the geographer Ptolemy, the southern part of Sweden seems to have continued in the possession of the less enterprising remnant of the nation, and a large territory is even at present divided into east and west Gothland. During the middle ages (from the ninth to the twelfth century), whilst Christianity was advancing with a slow progress into the North, the Goths and the Swedes composed two distinct and sometimes hostile members of the same monarchy.[10] The latter of these two names has prevailed without extinguishing the former. The Swedes, who might well be satisfied with their own fame in arms, have in every age claimed the kindred glory of the Goths. In a moment of discontent against the court of Rome, Charles the Twelfth insinuated that his victorious troops were not degenerated from their brave ancestors, who had already subdued the mistress of the world.[11]

Religion of the Goths

Till the end of the eleventh century, a celebrated temple subsisted at Upsal, the most considerable town of the Swedes and Goths. It was enriched with the gold which the Scandinavians had acquired in their piratical adventures, and sanctified by the uncouth representations of the three principal deities, the god of war, the goddess of generation, and the god of thunder. In the general festival that was solemnized every ninth year, nine animals of every species (without excepting the human) were sacrificed, and their bleeding bodies suspended in the sacred grove adjacent to the temple.[12] The only traces that now subsist of this barbaric superstition are contained in the Edda, a system of mythology, compiled in Iceland about the thirteenth century, and studied by the learned of Denmark and Sweden, as the most valuable remains of their ancient traditions.

Institutions and death of Odin

Notwithstanding the mysterious obscurity of the Edda, we can

[9] Jornandes, c. 3.

[10] See, in the Prolegomena of Grotius [to Hist. Gotth., Vand. et Lang.], some large extracts from Adam of Bremen [98 *sqq.*], and Saxo-Grammaticus [124 *sqq.*]. The former wrote in the year 1077, the latter flourished about the year 1200.

[11] Voltaire, Histoire de Charles XII. l. iii. When the Austrians desired the aid of the court of Rome against Gustavus Adolphus, they always represented that conqueror as the lineal successor of Alaric. Harte's History of Gustavus, vol. ii. p. 123.

[12] See Adam of Bremen in Grotii Prolegomenis, p. 104 [105]. The temple of Upsal was destroyed by Ingo King of Sweden, who began his reign in the year 1075, and about fourscore years afterwards a Christian Cathedral was erected on its ruins. See Dalin's History of Sweden in the Bibliothèque Raisonnée.

easily distinguish two persons confounded under the name of Odin—the god of war, and the great legislator of Scandinavia. The latter, the Mahomet of the North, instituted a religion adapted to the climate and to the people. Numerous tribes on either side of the Baltic were subdued by the invincible valour of Odin, by his persuasive eloquence, and by the fame which he acquired of a most skilful magician. The faith that he had propagated, during a long and prosperous life, he confirmed by a voluntary death. Apprehensive of the ignominious approach of disease and infirmity, he resolved to expire as became a warrior. In a solemn assembly of the Swedes and Goths, he wounded himself in nine mortal places, hastening away (as he asserted with his dying voice) to prepare the feast of heroes in the palace of the god of war.[13]

Agreeable but uncertain hypothesis concerning Odin

The native and proper habitation of Odin is distinguished by the appellation of As-gard. The happy resemblance of that name, with As-burg, or As-of,[14] words of a similar signification, has given rise to an historical system of so pleasing a contexture that we could almost wish to persuade ourselves of its truth. It is supposed that Odin was the chief of a tribe of barbarians which dwelt on the banks of the lake Mæotis, till the fall of Mithridates and the arms of Pompey menaced the North with servitude; that Odin, yielding with indignant fury to a power which he was unable to resist, conducted his tribe from the frontiers of the Asiatic Sarmatia into Sweden, with the great design of forming, in that inaccessible retreat of freedom, a religion and a people which, in some remote age, might be subservient to his immortal revenge; when his invincible Goths, armed with martial fanaticism, should issue in numerous swarms from the neighbourhood of the Polar circle, to chastise the oppressors of mankind.[15]

Emigration of the Goths from Scandinavia into Prussia

If so many successive generations of Goths were capable of preserving a faint tradition of their Scandinavian origin, we must

[13] Mallet, Introduction à l'Histoire du Dannemarc.

[14] Mallet. c. iv. p. 55, has collected from Strabo, Pliny, Ptolemy, and Stephanus Byzantinus, the vestiges of such a city and people.

[15] This wonderful expedition of Odin, which, by deducing the enmity of the Goths and Romans from so memorable a cause, might supply the noble groundwork of an Epic Poem, cannot safely be received as authentic history. According to the obvious sense of the Edda, and the interpretation of the most skilful critics, As-gard, instead of denoting a real city of the Asiatic Sarmatia, is the fictitious appellation of the mystic abode of the gods, the Olympus of Scandinavia; from whence the prophet was supposed to descend, when he announced his new religion to the Gothic nations, who were already seated in the southern parts of Sweden.

not expect, from such unlettered barbarians, any distinct account of the time and circumstances of their emigration. To cross the Baltic was an easy and natural attempt. The inhabitants of Sweden were masters of a sufficient number of large vessels with oars,[16] and the distance is little more than one hundred miles from Carlscroon to the nearest ports of Pomerania and Prussia. Here, at length, we land on firm and historic ground. At least as early as the Christian æra,[17] and as late as the age of the Antonines,[18] the Goths were established towards the mouth of the Vistula, and in that fertile province where the commercial cities of Thorn, Elbing, Königsberg, and Danzig, were long afterwards founded.[19] Westward of the Goths, the numerous tribes of the Vandals were spread along the banks of the Oder, and the sea coast of Pomerania and Mecklenburg. A striking resemblance of manners, complexion, religion, and language, seemed to indicate that the Vandals and the Goths were originally one great people.[20] The latter appear to have been subdivided into Ostrogoths, Visigoths, and Gepidæ.[21] The distinction among the Vandals was more strongly marked by the independent names of Heruli, Burgundians, Lombards, and a variety of other petty states, many of which, in a future age, expanded themselves into powerful monarchies.

From Prussia to Ukraine

In the age of the Antonines the Goths were still seated in Prussia. About the reign of Alexander Severus, the Roman province of Dacia had already experienced their proximity by frequent and destructive inroads.[22] In this interval, therefore,

[16] Tacit. Germania, c. 44.

[17] Tacit. Annal. ii. 62. If we could yield a firm assent to the navigations of Pytheas of Marseilles, we must allow that the Goths had passed the Baltic at least three hundred years before Christ.

[18] Ptolemy, l. ii.

[19] By the German colonies who followed the arms of the Teutonic knights. The conquest and conversion of Prussia were completed by those adventurers in the xiiith century.

[20] Pliny (Hist. Natur. iv. 14) and Procopius (in Bell. Vandal. l. i. c. 1 [2]) agree in this opinion. They lived in distant ages, and possessed different means of investigating the truth. [Resemblances in proper names point to a close kinship.]

[21] The *Ostro* and *Visi*, the Eastern and Western Goths, obtained those denominations from their original seats in Scandinavia. In all their future marches and settlements they preserved, with their names, the same relative situation. When they first departed from Sweden, the infant colony was contained in three vessels. The third being a heavy sailer lagged behind, and the crew, which afterwards swelled into a nation, received from that circumstance the appellation of Gepidæ or Loiterers. Jornandes, c. 17. [On this division and the early migrations of the Goths, see Appendix 15, 16.]

[22] See a fragment of Peter Patricius in the Excerpta Legationum; and with regard to its probable date, see Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 346. [Fr. 8, F.H.G. iv. p. 186].

of about seventy years, we must place the second migration of the Goths from the Baltic to the Euxine; but the cause that produced it lies concealed among the various motives which actuate the conduct of unsettled barbarians. Either a pestilence or a famine, a victory or a defeat, an oracle of the gods, or the eloquence of a daring leader, were sufficient to impel the Gothic arms on the milder climates of the south. Besides the influence of a martial religion, the numbers and spirit of the Goths were equal to the most dangerous adventures. The use of round bucklers and short swords rendered them formidable in a close engagement; the manly obedience which they yielded to hereditary kings gave uncommon union and stability to their councils;[23] and the renowned Amala, the hero of that age, and the tenth ancestor of Theodoric, king of Italy, enforced, by the ascendant of personal merit, the prerogative of his birth, which he derived from the *Anses*, or demigods of the Gothic nation.[24]

The Gothic nation increases in its march

The fame of a great enterprise excited the bravest warriors from all the Vandalic states of Germany, many of whom are seen a few years afterwards combating under the common standard of the Goths.[25] The first motions of the emigrants carried them to the banks of the Prypec, a river universally conceived by the ancients to be the southern branch of the Borysthenes.[26] The windings of that great stream through the plains of Poland and Russia gave a direction to their line of march, and a constant supply of fresh water and pasturage to their numerous herds of cattle. They followed the unknown course of the river, confident in their valour, and careless of whatever power might oppose their progress. The Bastarnæ and the Venedi were the first who presented themselves; and the flower of their youth, either from choice or compulsion, increased the Gothic army. The Bastarnæ dwelt on the northern side of the Carpathian mountains; the immense tract of land

[23] Omnium harum gentium insigne, rotunda scuta, breves gladii, et erga reges obsequium. Tacit. Germania, c. 43. The Goths probably acquired their iron by the commerce of amber.

[24] Jornandes, c. 13, 14. [Theodoric was not "King of Italy," as we shall see; the expression is a loose one.]

[25] The Heruli, and the Uregundi or Burgundi, are particularly mentioned. See Mascou's History of the Germans, l. v. A passage in the Augustan History, p. 28 [iv. 14], seems to allude to this great emigration. The Marcomannic war was partly occasioned by the pressure of barbarous tribes, who fled before the arms of more northern barbarians.

[26] D'Anville, Géographie Ancienne, and the third part of his incomparable map of Europe.

that separated the Bastarnæ from the savages of Finland was possessed, or rather wasted, by the Venedi:[27] we have some reason to believe that the first of these nations, which distinguished itself in the Macedonian war,[28] and was afterwards divided into the formidable tribes of the Peucini, the Borani, the Carpi, &c., derived its origin from the Germans. With better authority a Sarmatian extraction may be assigned to the Venedi, who rendered themselves so famous in the middle ages.[29] But the confusion of blood and manners on that doubtful frontier often perplexed the most accurate observers.[30] As the Goths advanced near the Euxine Sea, they encountered a purer race of Sarmatians, the Jazyges, the Alani, and the Roxolani; and they were probably the first Germans who saw the mouths of the Borysthenes and of the Tanais. If we inquire into the characteristic marks of the people of Germany and of Sarmatia, we shall discover that those two great portions of human kind were principally distinguished by fixed huts or moveable tents, by a close dress or flowing garments, by the marriage of one or of several wives, by a military force consisting, for the most part, either of infantry or cavalry; and, above all, by the use of the Teutonic, or of the Sclavonian language; the last of which has been diffused, by conquest, from the confines of Italy to the neighbourhood of Japan.

Distinction of Germans and Sarmatians

The Goths were now in possession of the Ukraine, a country of considerable extent and uncommon fertility, intersected with navigable rivers, which from either side discharge themselves into the Borysthenes; and interspersed with large and lofty forests of oaks. The plenty of game and fish, the innumerable bee-hives, deposited in the hollow of old trees and in the cavities of rocks, and forming, even in that rude age, a valuable branch of commerce, the size of the cattle, the temperature of the air, the aptness of the soil for every species of grain, and the luxuriancy of the vegetation, all displayed the liberality of Nature, and tempted the industry of man.[31] But the Goths withstood all these temptations, and still adhered to a life of idleness, of poverty, and of rapine.

Description of the Ukraine

[27] Tacit. Germania, c. 46. [The Bastarnæ were certainly a Germanic people.]

[28] Cluver. Germ. Antiqua, l. iii. c. 43.

[29] The Venedi, the *Slavi*, and the Antes, were the three great tribes of the same people. Jornandes, c. 24 [xxiii. 119, ed. Mommsen].

[30] Tacitus most assuredly deserves that title, and even his cautious suspense is a proof of his diligent inquiries.

[31] Genealogical History of the Tartars, p. 593. Mr. Bell (vol. ii. p. 379) traversed the Ukraine in his journey from Petersburgh to Constantinople. The modern face of the country is a just representation of the ancient, since, in the hands of the Cossacks, it still remains in a state of nature.

The Goths invade the Roman provinces

The Scythian hordes, which, towards the east, bordered on the new settlements of the Goths, presented nothing to their arms, except the doubtful chance of an unprofitable victory. But the prospect of the Roman territories was far more alluring; and the fields of Dacia were covered with rich harvests, sown by the hands of an industrious, and exposed to be gathered by those of a warlike, people. It is probable that the conquests of Trajan, maintained by his successors less for any real advantage than for ideal dignity, had contributed to weaken the empire on that side. The new and unsettled province of Dacia was neither strong enough to resist, nor rich enough to satiate, the rapaciousness of the barbarians. As long as the remote banks of the Dniester were considered as the boundary of the Roman power, the fortifications of the Lower Danube were more carelessly guarded, and the inhabitants of Mæsia lived in supine security, fondly conceiving themselves at an inaccessible distance from any barbarian invaders. The irruptions of the Goths, under the reign of Philip, fatally convinced them of their mistake. The king or leader[32] of that fierce nation traversed with contempt the province of Dacia, and passed both the Dniester and the Danube without encountering any opposition capable of retarding his progress. The relaxed discipline of the Roman troops betrayed the most important posts where they were stationed, and the fear of deserved punishment induced great numbers of them to enlist under the Gothic standard. The various multitude of barbarians appeared, at length, under the walls of Marcianopolis, a city built by Trajan in honour of his sister, and at that time the capital of the second Mæsia.[33] The inhabitants consented to ransom their lives and property by the payment of a large sum of money, and the invaders retreated back into their deserts, animated, rather than satisfied, with the first success of their arms against an opulent but feeble country. Intelligence was soon transmitted to the Emperor Decius, that Cniva, King of the Goths, had passed the Danube a second time, with more considerable forces; that his numerous detachments

[32] [Ostrogotha is said to have been his name. Compare the eponymous ancestors of the Greek tribes—Dorus, Æolus, Ion, Achæus, &c.]

[33] In the sixteenth chapter of Jornandes, instead of *secundo* Mæsiam, we may venture to substitute *secundam*, the second Mæsia, of which Marcianopolis was certainly the capital (see Hierocles de Provinciis, and Wesseling ad locum, p. 636 Itinerar.). It is surprising how this palpable error of the scribe could escape the judicious correction of Grotius. [*Et secundo Moesiam populati.* But the Laurentian Ms. has *die* before *secundo*, hence the true correction is *de secundo*, see Mommsen's edition, p. 81. The siege of Marcianopolis is described at length in frag. 18 of Dexippus, first published by Müller, F. H. G. iii. p. 675.]

scattered devastation over the province of Mæsia, whilst the main body of the army, consisting of seventy thousand Germans and Sarmatians, a force equal to the most daring achievements, required the presence of the Roman monarch, and the exertion of his military power.

Various events of the Gothic war, A.D. 250

Decius found the Goths engaged before Nicopolis, on the Jatrus, one of the many monuments of Trajan's victories.[34] On his approach they raised the siege, but with a design only of marching away to a conquest of greater importance, the siege of Philippopolis, a city of Thrace, founded by the father of Alexander, near the foot of Mount Hæmus.[35] Decius followed them through a difficult country, and by forced marches; but, when he imagined himself at a considerable distance from the rear of the Goths, Cniva turned with rapid fury on his pursuers. The camp of the Romans was surprised and pillaged, and, for the first time, their emperor fled in disorder before a troop of half-armed barbarians. After a long resistance Philippopolis, destitute of succour, was taken by storm. A hundred thousand persons are reported to have been massacred in the sack of that great city.[36] Many prisoners of consequence became a valuable accession to the spoil; and Priscus, a brother of the late emperor Philip, blushed not to assume the purple under the protection of the barbarous enemies of Rome.[37] The time, however, consumed in that tedious siege, enabled Decius to revive the courage, restore the discipline, and recruit the numbers of his troops. He intercepted several parties of Carpi, and other Germans, who were hastening to share the victory of their countrymen,[38] intrusted the passes of the mountains to officers of approved valour and fidelity,[39] repaired and strengthened the fortifications of the Danube, and exerted his utmost vigilance to

[34] The place is still called Nicop. The little stream [Iantra], on whose banks it stood, falls into the Danube. D'Anville Géographie Ancienne, tom. i. p. 307.

[35] Stephan. Byzant. de Urbibus, p. 740. Wesseling Itinerar. p. 136. Zonaras, by an odd mistake, ascribes the foundation of Philippopolis to the immediate predecessor of Decius.

[36] Ammian. xxxi. 5. [A fragment of Dexippus, first edited by Müller (F. H. G. iii. p. 678, fr. 20), gives a long description of an ineffectual siege of Philippopolis by the Goths. Müller concludes that there were two sieges, the first unsuccessful, before the defeat and death of Decius, the second successful, after that disaster. This is supported by the words of Ammianus, xxxi. 5.]

[37] Aurel. Victor [Cæsar.] c. 29. [Dexippus, frags. 19, 20; Zos. i. 19.]

[38] *Victoriæ Carpicæ*, on some medals of Decius, insinuate these advantages.

[39] Claudius (who afterwards reigned with so much glory) was posted in the pass of Thermopylæ with 200 Dardanians, 100 heavy and 160 light horse, 60 Cretan archers, and 1000 well-armed recruits. See an original letter from the emperor to his officers in the Augustan History, p. 200 [xxv. 16].

oppose either the progress or the retreat of the Goths. Encouraged by the return of fortune, he anxiously waited for an opportunity to retrieve, by a great and decisive blow, his own glory, and that of the Roman arms.[40]

Decius revives the office of censor in the person of Valerian

At the same time when Decius was struggling with the violence of the tempest, his mind, calm and deliberate amidst the tumult of war, investigated the more general causes that, since the age of the Antonines, had so impetuously urged the decline of the Roman greatness. He soon discovered that it was impossible to replace that greatness on a permanent basis without restoring public virtue, ancient principles and manners, and the oppressed majesty of the laws. To execute this noble but arduous design, he first resolved to revive the obsolete office of censor; an office which, as long as it had subsisted in its pristine integrity, had so much contributed to the perpetuity of the state,[41] till it was usurped and gradually neglected by the Cæsars.[42] Conscious that the favour of the sovereign may confer power, but that the esteem of the people can alone bestow authority, he submitted the choice of the censor to the unbiassed voice of the senate. By their unanimous votes, or rather acclamations, Valerian, who was afterwards emperor, and who then served with distinction in the army of Decius, was declared the most worthy of that exalted honour. As soon as the decree of the senate was transmitted to the emperor, he assembled a great council in his camp, and, before the investiture of the censor elect, he apprized him of the difficulty and importance of his great office. "Happy Valerian," said the prince, to his distinguished subject, "happy in the general approbation of the senate and of the Roman republic! Accept the censorship of mankind, and judge of our manners. You will select those who

A.D. 251, 27th October

[40] Jornandes, c. 16—18. Zosimus, l. i. p. 22 [23]. In the general account of this war, it is easy to discover the opposite prejudices of the Gothic and the Grecian writer. In carelessness alone they are alike.

[41] Montesquieu, Grandeur et Décadence des Romains, c. 8. He illustrates the nature and use of the censorship with his usual ingenuity and with uncommon precision. [It is hard to suppose that Decius was so unsophisticated as really to imagine that the revival of the censorship would be likely to promote a revival of morals. It has been conjectured that the measure was a concession to the senate.]

[42] Vespasian and Titus were the last censors (Pliny, Hist. Natur. vii. 49. Censorinus de Die Natali). The modesty of Trajan refused an honour which he deserved, and his example became a law to the Antonines. See Pliny's Panegyric, c. 45 and 60. [The author apparently thought that Domitian held only the *censoria potestas*. At first indeed he was content with this; it was conferred on him in 84 or 85 A.D.; but soon afterwards he assumed the censorship for life. His object was to control the senate. Martial (vi. 4) addresses him as *Censor maxime*.]

deserve to continue members of the senate; you will restore the equestrian order to its ancient splendour; you will improve the revenue, yet moderate the public burdens. You will distinguish into regular classes the various and infinite multitude of citizens, and accurately review the military strength, the wealth, the virtue, and the resources of Rome. Your decisions shall obtain the force of laws. The army, the palace, the ministers of justice, and the great officers of the empire are all subject to your tribunal. None are exempted, excepting only the ordinary consuls,[43] the præfect of the city, the king of the sacrifices, and (as long as she preserves her chastity inviolate) the eldest of the vestal virgins. Even these few, who may not dread the severity, will anxiously solicit the esteem, of the Roman censor." [44]

The design impracticable, and without effect

A magistrate invested with such extensive powers would have appeared not so much the minister as the colleague of his sovereign.[45] Valerian justly dreaded an elevation so full of envy and of suspicion. He modestly urged the alarming greatness of the trust, his own insufficiency, and the incurable corruption of the times. He artfully insinuated that the office of censor was inseparable from the Imperial dignity, and that the feeble hands of a subject were unequal to the support of such an immense weight of cares and of power.[46] The approaching event of war soon put an end to the prosecution of a project so specious but so impracticable, and, whilst it preserved Valerian from the danger, saved the emperor Decius from the disappointment, which would most probably have attended it. A censor may maintain, he can never restore, the morals of a state. It is impossible for such a magistrate to exert his authority with benefit, or even with effect, unless he is supported by a quick sense of honour and virtue in the minds of the people, by a decent reverence for the public opinion, and by a train of useful prejudices combating on the side of national manners. In a period when these principles are annihilated, the censorial jurisdiction must either sink into empty pageantry, or be converted into a partial instrument of vexatious oppression.[47] It was easier to vanquish the Goths than to eradicate the public vices; yet, even in

[43] Yet in spite of this exemption Pompey appeared before that tribunal, during his consulship. The occasion indeed was equally singular and honourable. Plutarch in Pomp. p. 630 [22].

[44] See the original speech in the Augustan Hist. p. 173, 174 [xxii. 6 (2)].

[45] This transaction might deceive Zonaras, who supposes that Valerian was actually declared the colleague of Decius, l. xii. p. 625 [20].

[46] Hist. August. p. 174 [ib.]. The emperor's reply is omitted.

[47] Such as the attempts of Augustus towards a reformation of manners. Tacit. Annal. iii. 24.

the first of these enterprises, Decius lost his army and his life.

Defeat and death of Decius and his son

The Goths were now, on every side, surrounded and pursued by the Roman arms. The flower of their troops had perished in the long siege of Philippopolis, and the exhausted country could no longer afford subsistence for the remaining multitude of licentious barbarians. Reduced to this extremity, the Goths would gladly have purchased, by the surrender of all their booty and prisoners, the permission of an undisturbed retreat. But the emperor, confident of victory, and resolving, by the chastisement of these invaders, to strike a salutary terror into the nations of the North, refused to listen to any terms of accommodation. The high-spirited barbarians preferred death to slavery. An obscure town of Mæsia, called Forum Terebronii,[48] was the scene of the battle. The Gothic army was drawn up in three lines, and, either from choice or accident, the front of the third line was covered by a morass. In the beginning of the action, the son of Decius, a youth of the fairest hopes, and already associated to the honours of the purple, was slain by an arrow, in the sight of his afflicted father; who, summoning all his fortitude, admonished the dismayed troops that the loss of a single soldier was of little importance to the republic.[49] The conflict was terrible; it was the combat of despair against grief and rage. The first line of the Goths at length gave way in disorder; the second, advancing to sustain it, shared its fate; and the third only remained entire, prepared to dispute the passage of the morass, which was imprudently attempted by the presumption of the enemy. "Here the fortune of the day turned, and all things became adverse to the Romans: the place deep with ooze, sinking under those who stood, slippery to such as advanced; their armour heavy, the waters deep; nor could they wield, in that uneasy situation, their weighty javelins. The barbarians, on the contrary, were enured to encounters in the bogs; their persons tall, their spears long, such as could wound at a distance."[50] In this morass the Roman army, after an ineffectual struggle, was irrecoverably lost; nor could the body of the

[48] Tillemont, Histoire des Empereurs, tom. iii. 598. As Zosimus and some of his followers mistake the Danube for the Tanais, they place the field of battle in the plains of Scythia. [Forum Trebonii or Abrittus is in the province of Scythia, which is the modern Dobrudža, but the site has not been discovered.]

[49] Aurelius Victor allows two distinct actions for the deaths of the two Decii; but I have preferred the account of Jornandes. [And so Dexippus, fr. 16.]

[50] I have ventured to copy from Tacitus (Annal. i. 64) the picture of a similar engagement between a Roman army and a German tribe.

emperor ever be found.[51] Such was the fate of Decius, in the fiftieth year of his age; an accomplished prince, active in war, and affable in peace;[52] who, together with his son, has deserved to be compared, both in life and death, with the brightest examples of ancient virtue.[53]

Election of Gallus, A.D. 251, December

This fatal blow humbled, for a very little time, the insolence of the legions. They appear to have patiently expected, and submissively obeyed, the decree of the senate which regulated the succession to the throne. From a just regard for the memory of Decius, the Imperial title was conferred on Hostilianus, his only surviving son; but an equal rank, with more effectual power, was granted to Gallus,[54] whose experience and ability seemed

A.D. 252

equal to the great trust of guardian to the young prince and the distressed empire.[55] The first care of the new emperor was to deliver the Illyrian provinces from the intolerable weight of the victorious Goths. He consented to leave in their hands the rich fruits of their invasion, an immense booty, and, what was

Retreat of the Goths

still more disgraceful, a great number of prisoners of the highest merit and quality. He plentifully supplied their camp with every conveniency that could assuage their angry spirits, or facilitate their so much wished-for departure; and he even promised to pay them annually a large sum of gold, on condition they should never afterwards infest the Roman territories by their incursions.[56]

Gallus purchases peace by the payment of an annual tribute

In the age of the Scipios, the most opulent kings of the earth, who courted the protection of the victorious commonwealth, were gratified with such trifling presents as could only derive a value from the hand that bestowed them; an ivory chair, a coarse garment of purple, an inconsiderable piece of plate, or a quantity of copper coin.[57] After the wealth of nations had

[51] Jornandes, c. 18. Zosimus, l. i. p. 22 [23]. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 627 [20]. Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 29, 5, and Victor, epit. 29].

[52] The Decii were killed before the end of the year two hundred and fifty-one, since the new princes took possession of the consulship on the ensuing calends of January. [Tillemont has argued for end of November 251, and is followed by Hodgkin, i. p. 56, but Alexandrian coins prove that it must be earlier than August 29, 251. See Schiller, i. 807.]

[53] Hist. August. p. 223 [xxvi. 42] gives them a very honourable place among the small number of good emperors who reigned between Augustus and Diocletian.

[54] [C. Vibius Trebonianus Gallus, governor of the two Moesias.]

[55] Hæc, ubi Patres comperere. . . . decernunt. Victor in Cæsaribus [30].

[56] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 628 [21. Zosimus, i. 24].

[57] A *Sella*, a *Toga*, and a golden *Patera* of five pounds weight, were accepted with joy and gratitude by the wealthy King of Egypt (Livy, xxvii. 4). *Quina millia Æris*, a weight of copper in value about eighteen pounds sterling, was the usual present made to foreign ambassadors (Livy, xxxi. 9).

centred in Rome, the emperors displayed their greatness, and even their policy, by the regular exercise of a steady and moderate liberality towards the allies of the state. They relieved the poverty of the barbarians, honoured their merit, and recompensed their fidelity. These voluntary marks of bounty were understood to flow, not from the fears, but merely from the generosity or the gratitude of the Romans; and whilst presents and subsidies were liberally distributed among friends and suppliants, they were sternly refused to such as claimed them as a debt.[58] But this stipulation of an annual payment to a victorious enemy appeared without disguise in the light of an ignominious tribute; the minds of the Romans were not yet accustomed to accept such unequal laws from a tribe of barbarians; and the prince, who by a necessary concession had probably saved his country, became the object of the general contempt and aversion. The death of Hostilianus, though it happened in the midst of a raging pestilence, was interpreted as the personal crime of Gallus;[59] and even the defeat of the late emperor was ascribed by the voice of suspicion to the perfidious counsels of his hated successor.[60] The tranquillity which the empire enjoyed during the first year of his administration[61] served rather to inflame than to appease the public discontent; and, as soon as the apprehensions of war were removed, the infamy of the peace was more deeply and more sensibly felt.

Popular discontent

But the Romans were irritated to a still higher degree, when they discovered that they had not even secured their repose, though at the expense of their honour. The dangerous secret of the wealth and weakness of the empire had been revealed to the world. New swarms of barbarians, encouraged by the success, and not conceiving themselves bound by the obligation, of their brethren, spread devastation through the Illyrian provinces, and terror as far as the gates of Rome. The defence of the monarchy, which seemed abandoned by the pusillanimous emperor, was assumed by Æmilianus,[62] governor of Pannonia and Mæsia; who rallied the scattered forces and revived the fainting spirits of the troops. The barbarians were unexpectedly

Victory and revolt of Æmilianus, A.D. 253

[58] See the firmness of a Roman general so late as the time of Alexander Severus, in the Excerpta Legationum, p. 25. Edit. Louvre.

[59] For the plague see Jornandes, c. 19, and Victor in Cæsaribus [30, 2. John of Antioch, frag. 151].

[60] These improbable accusations are alleged by Zosimus, l. i. p. 23, 24 [24].

[61] Jornandes, c. 19. The Gothic writer at least observed the peace which his victorious countrymen had sworn to Gallus.

[62] [M. Æmilius Æmilianus,]

attacked, routed, chased, and pursued beyond the Danube. The victorious leader distributed as a donative the money collected for the tribute, and the acclamations of the soldiers proclaimed him emperor on the field of battle.[63] Gallus, who, careless of the general welfare, indulged himself in the pleasures of Italy, was almost in the same instant informed of the success, of the revolt, and of the rapid approach, of his aspiring lieutenant. He advanced to meet him as far as the plains of Spoleto. When the armies came in sight of each other, the soldiers of Gallus compared the ignominious conduct of their sovereign with the glory of his rival. They admired the valour of Æmilianus; they were attracted by his liberality, for he offered a considerable increase of pay to all deserters.[64] The murder of Gallus, and of his son Volusianus,[65] put an end to the civil war; and the senate gave a legal sanction to the rights of conquest. The letters of Æmilianus to that assembly displayed a mixture of moderation and vanity. He assured them that he should resign to their wisdom the civil administration; and, contenting himself with the quality of their general, would in a short time assert the glory of Rome, and deliver the empire from all the barbarians both of the North and of the East.[66] His pride was flattered by the applause of the senate; and medals are still extant, representing him with the name and attributes of Hercules the Victor, and of Mars the Avenger.[67]

Gallus abandoned and slain, A.D. 253, May

If the new monarch possessed the abilities, he wanted the time, necessary to fulfil these splendid promises. Less than four months intervened between his victory and his fall.[68] He had vanquished Gallus: he sunk under the weight of a competitor more formidable than Gallus. That unfortunate prince had sent Valerian, already distinguished by the honourable title of

Valerian revenges the death of Gallus, and is acknowledged emperor

[63] Zosimus, l. i. p. 25, 26 [28].

[64] Victor in Cæsaribus [31, 2, states that Gallus and his son were slain at Interamna].

[65] [Veldumnianus Volusianus became Cæsar on the accession of his father, and Augustus on the death of Hostilianus (before end of 251).]

[66] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 628 [22].

[67] Banduri Numismata, p. 94.

[68] Eutropius, l. ix. c. 6, says tertio mense. Eusebius omits this emperor. [Valerian and Gallienus were emperors before 22nd October 253; see Wilmanns, 1472. Alexandrian coins, which are so useful in determining limits, prove that Æmilianus must have overthrown Gallus before 29th August 253, and that he was not slain himself earlier than 30th August 253. Aurelius Victor and Zonaras agree that the reign of Æmilianus lasted not quite four months; Jordanes, like Eutropius, says *tertio mense*. If, then, we place the death of Æmilianus early in September, we must place that of Gallus late in May or early in June. See Schiller, i. 810.]

censor, to bring the legions of Gaul and Germany[69] to his aid. Valerian executed that commission with zeal and fidelity; and, as he arrived too late to save his sovereign, he resolved to revenge him. The troops of Æmilianus, who still lay encamped in the plains of Spoleto, were awed by the sanctity of his character, but much more by the superior strength of his army; and, as they were now become as incapable of personal attachment as they had always been of constitutional principle, they readily imbrued their hands in the blood of a prince who so lately had been the object of their partial choice. The guilt was theirs, but the advantage of it was Valerian's; who obtained the possession of the throne by the means indeed of a civil war, but with a degree of innocence singular in that age of revolutions; since he owed neither gratitude nor allegiance to his predecessor, whom he dethroned. A.D. 253, August

Valerian was about sixty years of age[70] when he was invested with the purple, not by the caprice of the populace or the clamours of the army, but by the unanimous voice of the Roman world. In his gradual ascent through the honours of the state he had deserved the favour of virtuous princes, and had declared himself the enemy of tyrants.[71] His noble birth, his mild but unblemished manners, his learning, prudence, and experience, were revered by the senate and people; and, if mankind (according to the observation of an ancient writer) had been left at liberty to choose a master, their choice would most assuredly have fallen on Valerian.[72] Perhaps the merit of this emperor was inadequate to his reputation; perhaps his abilities, or at least his spirit, were affected by the languor and coldness of old age. The consciousness of his decline engaged him to share the throne with a younger and more active associate:[73] the emergency of the times demanded a general no less than a Character of Valerian

General misfortunes of reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, A.D. 253-268

[69] Zosimus, l. i. p. 28 [29]. Eutropius and Victor station Valerian's army in Rhætia [where they proclaimed him Emperor].

[70] He was about seventy at the time of his accession, or, as it is more probable, of his death. Hist. August. p. 173 [xxii. 5 (1)]. Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 893, note 1.

[71] Inimicus Tyrannorum, Hist. August. p. 173 [ib.]. In the glorious struggle of the senate against Maximin, Valerian acted a very spirited part. Hist. August. p. 156 [xx. 9].

[72] According to the distinction of Victor, he seems to have received the title of *Imperator* from the army, and that of Augustus from the senate.

[73] From Victor and from the medals, Tillemont (tom. iii. p. 710) very justly infers that Gallienus was associated to the empire about the month of August of the year 253. [This date is too early. Æmilianus was not slain till after August 29. We can only say that Gallienus was associated as Augustus before October 22.]

prince; and the experience of the Roman censor might have directed him where to bestow the Imperial purple, as the reward of military merit. But, instead of making a judicious choice, which would have confirmed his reign and endeared his memory, Valerian, consulting only the dictates of affection or vanity, immediately invested with the supreme honours his son Gallienus,[74] a youth whose effeminate vices had been hitherto concealed by the obscurity of a private station. The joint government of the father and the son subsisted about seven, and the sole administration of Gallienus continued about eight, years. But the whole period was one uninterrupted series of confusion and calamity. As the Roman empire was at the same time, and on every side, attacked by the blind fury of foreign invaders, and the wild ambition of domestic usurpers, we shall consult order and perspicuity by pursuing not so much the doubtful arrangement of dates as the more natural distribution of subjects.

Inroads of the barbarians

The most dangerous enemies of Rome, during the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, were,—1. The Franks. 2. The Alemanni. 3. The Goths; and, 4. The Persians. Under these general appellations we may comprehend the adventures of less considerable tribes, whose obscure and uncouth names would only serve to oppress the memory and perplex the attention of the reader.

Origin and confederacy of the Franks

I. As the posterity of the Franks compose one of the greatest and most enlightened nations of Europe, the powers of learning and ingenuity have been exhausted in the discovery of their unlettered ancestors. To the tales of credulity have succeeded the systems of fancy. Every passage has been sifted, every spot has been surveyed, that might possibly reveal some faint traces of their origin. It has been supposed that Pannonia,[75] that Gaul, that the northern parts of Germany,[76] gave birth to that celebrated colony of warriors. At length the most rational critics, rejecting the fictitious emigrations of ideal conquerors, have acquiesced in a sentiment whose simplicity persuades us of its truth.[77] They suppose that, about the year two hundred

[74] [P. Licinius Egnatius Gallienus. The son of Gallienus was also associated in the empire—P. Licinius Cornelius Valerianus.]

[75] Various systems have been formed to explain difficult passages in Gregory of Tours, l. ii. c. 9.

[76] The Geographer of Ravenna, i. 11, by mentioning *Mauringania* on the confines of Denmark, as the ancient seat of the Franks, gave birth to an ingenious system of Leibnitz.

[77] See Cluver. Germania Antiqua, l. iii. c. 20. M. Freret, in the Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xviii. [The Franks were the descendants of the

and forty,[78] a new confederacy was formed under the name of Franks by the old inhabitants of the Lower Rhine and the Weser. The present circle of Westphalia, the Landgraviate of Hesse, and the duchies of Brunswick and Luneburg, were the ancient seat of the Chauci, who, in their inaccessible morasses, defied the Roman arms;[79] of the Cherusci, proud of the fame of Arminius; of the Catti, formidable by their firm and intrepid infantry; and of several other tribes of inferior power and renown.[80] The love of liberty was the ruling passion of these Germans; the enjoyment of it their best treasure; the word that expressed that enjoyment the most pleasing to their ear. They deserved, they assumed, they maintained the honourable epithet of Franks or Freemen; which concealed, though it did not extinguish, the peculiar names of the several states of the confederacy.[81] Tacit consent and mutual advantage dictated the first laws of the union; it was gradually cemented by habit and experience. The league of the Franks may admit of some comparison with the Helvetic body; in which every canton, retaining its independent sovereignty, consults with its brethren in the common cause, without acknowledging the authority of any supreme head or representative assembly.[82] But the principle of the two confederacies was extremely different. A peace of two hundred years has rewarded the wise and honest policy of the Swiss. An inconstant spirit, the thirst of rapine, and a disregard to the most solemn treaties, disgraced the character of the Franks.

They invade Gaul

The Romans had long experienced the daring valour of the people of Lower Germany. The union of their strength threatened Gaul with a more formidable invasion, and required the presence of Gallienus, the heir and colleague of Imperial power.[83] Whilst that prince[84] and his infant son Saloninus displayed in the court of Treves the majesty of the empire, its armies were

Sugambri and Chamavi and in the third century had been increased by the Chatti. The Amsivarii, Chattuarii and some of the Bructeri also joined their "league".]

[78] Most probably under the reign of Gordian, from an accidental circumstance fully canvassed by Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 710, 1181.

[79] Plin. Hist. Natur. xvi. 1. The panegyrists frequently allude to the morasses of the Franks.

[80] Tacit. Germania, c. 30, 37.

[81] In a subsequent period most of those old names are occasionally mentioned. See some vestiges of them in Cluver. Germ. Antiq. l. iii

[82] Simler de Republicâ Helvet, cum notis Fuselin.

[83] Zosimus, l. i. p. 27 [30].

[84] [Zonaras, xii. 14.]

ably conducted by their general Posthumus,[85] who, though he afterwards betrayed[86] the family of Valerian, was ever faithful to the great interest of the monarchy. The treacherous language of panegyrics and medals darkly announces a long series of victories. Trophies and titles attest (if such evidence can attest) the fame of Posthumus, who is repeatedly styled The Conqueror of the Germans, and the Saviour of Gaul.[87]

ravage Spain

But a single fact, the only one indeed of which we have any distinct knowledge, erases in a great measure these monuments of vanity and adulation. The Rhine, though dignified with the title of Safeguard of the provinces, was an imperfect barrier against the daring spirit of enterprise with which the Franks were actuated. Their rapid devastations stretched from the river to the foot of the Pyrenees; nor were they stopped by those mountains. Spain, which had never dreaded, was unable to resist, the inroads of the Germans. During twelve years,[88] the greatest part of the reign of Gallienus, that opulent country was the theatre of unequal and destructive hostilities. Tarragona, the flourishing capital of a peaceful province, was sacked and almost destroyed;[89] and so late as the days of Orosius, who wrote in the fifth century, wretched cottages, scattered amidst the ruins of magnificent cities, still recorded the rage of the barbarians.[90] When the exhausted country no longer supplied a variety of plunder, the Franks seized on some vessels in the ports of Spain[91] and transported themselves into Mauritania. The distant province was astonished with the fury of these bar-

and pass over into Africa

[85] [M. Cassianius Latinius Postumus.]

[86] [He was proclaimed emperor by the soldiers in 258, shortly after Gallienus had hastened from the Rhine frontier to the defence of the Danube. The emperor's elder son and colleague, Valerian the Younger, who had been left at Köln to represent him, was slain by the rebels in 259. The reign of Postumus, one of the "thirty tyrants," lasted till 268. Gibbon omits to mention the elder son of Gallienus, Valerian. Saloninus was the younger, but he was called Valerian after his brother's death.]

[87] M. de Brequigny (in the Mémoires de l'Académie, tom. xxx.) has given us a very curious life of Posthumus. A series of the Augustan History from Medals and Inscriptions has been more than once planned, and is still much wanted. [See Eckhel, vii. 439.]

[88] [256-268 A.D.]

[89] Aurel. Victor [Cæs.], c. 33 [§ 3]. Instead of *Pæne direpto*, both the sense and the expression require *deleto*, though, indeed, for different reasons, it is alike difficult to correct the text of the best and of the worst writers.

[90] In the time of Ausonius (the end of the fourth century) Ilerda or Lerida was in a very ruinous state (Auson. Epist. xxv. 58), which probably was the consequence of this invasion. [See Orosius, vii. 22, 8.]

[91] Valesius is therefore mistaken in supposing that the Franks had invaded Spain by sea.

barians, who seemed to fall from a new world, as their name, manners, and complexion were equally unknown on the coast of Africa.[92]

Origin and renown of the Suevi

II. In that part of Upper Saxony, beyond the Elbe, which is at present called the Marquisate of Lusace, there existed in ancient times a sacred wood, the awful seat of the superstition of the Suevi. None were permitted to enter the holy precincts without confessing, by their servile bonds and suppliant posture, the immediate presence of the sovereign Deity.[93] Patriotism contributed, as well as devotion, to consecrate the Sonnenwald, or wood of the Semnones.[94] It was universally believed that the nation had received its first existence on that sacred spot. At stated periods the numerous tribes who gloried in the Suevic blood resorted thither by their ambassadors; and the memory of their common extraction was perpetuated by barbaric rights and human sacrifices. The wide extended name of Suevi filled the interior countries of Germany, from the banks of the Oder to those of the Danube. They were distinguished from the other Germans by their peculiar mode of dressing their long hair, which they gathered into a rude knot on the crown of the head; and they delighted in an ornament that showed their ranks more lofty and terrible in the eyes of the enemy.[95] Jealous as the Germans were of military renown, they all confessed the superior valour of the Suevi; and the tribes of the Usipetes and Tencteri, who, with a vast army, encountered the dictator Cæsar, declared that they esteemed it not a disgrace to have fled before a people to whose arms the immortal gods themselves were unequal.[96]

A mixed body of Suevi assume the name of Alemanni

In the reign of the Emperor Caracalla, an innumerable swarm of Suevi appeared on the banks of the Main, and in the neighbourhood of the Roman provinces, in quest either of food, of plunder, or of glory.[97] The hasty army of volunteers gradually coalesced into a great and permanent nation, and, as it was composed from so many different tribes, assumed the name of Alemanni, or *Allmen,* to denote at once their various lineage and

[92] Aurel. Victor [Cæs. 33]. Eutrop. ix. 6.

[93] Tacit. Germania, 38 [39].

[94] Cluver. German. Antiq. iii. 25.

[95] Sic Suevi a ceteris Germanis, sic Suevorum ingenui a servis separantur. A proud separation!

[96] Cæsar in Bello Gallico, iv. 7.

[97] Victor in Caracal. [Cæs. 21]. Dion Cassius, lxxvii. p. 1350 [13]. [The invaders were defeated by Caracalla, 213 A.D.]

their common bravery.[98] The latter was soon felt by the Romans in many a hostile inroad. The Alemanni fought chiefly on horseback ; but their cavalry was rendered still more formidable by a mixture of light infantry selected from the bravest and most active of the youth, whom frequent exercise had enured to accompany the horsemen in the longest march, the most rapid charge, or the most precipitate retreat.[99]

invade Gaul and Italy

This warlike people of Germans had been astonished by the immense preparations of Alexander Severus; they were dismayed by the arms of his successor, a barbarian equal in valour and fierceness to themselves. But, still hovering on the frontiers of the empire, they increased the general disorder that ensued after the death of Decius. They inflicted severe wounds on the rich provinces of Gaul : they were the first who removed the veil that covered the feeble majesty of Italy. A numerous body of the Alemanni penetrated across the Danube, and through the Rhætian Alps into the plains of Lombardy, advanced as far as Ravenna, and displayed the victorious banners of barbarians almost in sight of Rome.[100] The insult and the danger rekindled in the senate some sparks of their ancient virtue. Both the emperors were engaged in far distant wars, Valerian in the East, and Gallienus on the Rhine. All the hopes and resources of the Romans were in themselves. In this emergency, the senators resumed the defence of the republic, drew out the Prætorian guards, who had been left to garrison the capital, and filled up their numbers by enlisting into the public service the stoutest and most willing of the Plebeians. The Alemanni, astonished with the sudden appearance of an army more numerous than their own, retired into Germany, laden with spoil ; and their retreat was esteemed as a victory by the unwarlike Romans.[101]

are repulsed from Rome by the senate and people

The senators excluded by Gallienus from the military service

When Gallienus received the intelligence that his capital was delivered from the barbarians, he was much less delighted than

[98] This etymology (far different from those which amuse the fancy of the learned) is preserved by Asinius Quadratus, an original historian, quoted by Agathias, i. c. 5. [Another derivation is Alah-mannen, "men of the sanctuary," referring to the wood of the Semnones. The identification of the Alamanni with the Suevians is very uncertain.]

[99] The Suevi engaged Cæsar in this manner and the manœuvre deserved the approbation of the conqueror (in Bello Gallico, i. 48).

[100] Hist. August. p. 215, 216 [xxvi. 18, 21]. Dexippus in the Excerpta Legationum, p. 8 [p. 11, ed. Bonn ; F.H.G. iii. p. 682]. Hieronym. Chron. Orosius, vii. 22. [The first campaigns of Gallienus against the Alamanni were in 256 and 257. The invasion of Italy took place 259-260. Simultaneously another band invaded Gaul, and was subdued near Arelate ; Gregory of Tours, i. 32.]

[101] Zosimus, l. i. p. 34 [37].

alarmed with the courage of the senate, since it might one day prompt them to rescue the republic[a] from domestic tyranny, as well as from foreign invasion. His timid ingratitude was published to his subjects in an edict which prohibited the senators from exercising any military employment, and even from approaching the camps of the legions. But his fears were groundless. The rich and luxurious nobles, sinking into their natural character, accepted as a favour this disgraceful exemption from military service; and, as long as they were indulged in the enjoyment of their baths, their theatres, and their villas, they cheerfully resigned the more dangerous cares of empire to the rough hands of peasants and soldiers.[102]

Gallienus contracts an alliance with the Alemanni

Another invasion of the Alemanni, of a more formidable aspect, but more glorious event, is mentioned by a writer of the Lower Empire. Three hundred thousand of that warlike people are said to have been vanquished, in a battle near Milan, by Gallienus in person, at the head of only ten thousand Romans.[103] We may however, with great probability, ascribe this incredible victory either to the credulity of the historian, or to some exaggerated exploits of one of the emperor's lieutenants. It was by arms of a very different nature that Gallienus endeavoured to protect Italy from the fury of the Germans. He espoused Pipa, the daughter of a king of the Marcomanni, a Suevic tribe, which was often confounded with the Alemanni in their wars and conquests.[104] To the father, as the price of his alliance, he granted an ample settlement in Pannonia. The native charms of unpolished beauty seem to have fixed the daughter in the affections of the inconstant emperor, and the bands of policy were more firmly connected by those of love. But the haughty prejudice of Rome still refused the name of marriage to the profane mixture of a citizen and a barbarian; and has stigmatized the German princess with the opprobrious title of concubine of Gallienus.[105]

Inroads of the Goths

III. We have already traced the emigration of the Goths from

[a] [The original text has *public*. I have ventured to amend. Ed.]

[102] Aurel. Victor in Gallieno et Probo [Cæsar. 34, 37]. His complaints breathe an uncommon spirit of freedom.

[103] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 631 [24. This victory was probably gained in the same invasion which has been already described; Gallienus fell upon them as they were retreating. We need not assume two invasions, or doubt the statement of Zonaras.]

[104] One of the Victors calls him King of the Marcomanni, the other, of the Germans.

[105] See Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 398, &c. [She was only a concubine and must not be confounded with the Empress Salonina.]

Scandinavia, or at least from Prussia, to the mouth of the Borysthenes, and have followed their victorious arms from the Borysthenes to the Danube. Under the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus the frontier of the last-mentioned river was perpetually infested by the inroads of Germans and Sarmatians; but it was defended by the Romans with more than usual firmness and success. The provinces that were the seat of war recruited the armies of Rome with an inexhaustible supply of hardy soldiers; and more than one of these Illyrian peasants attained the station, and displayed the abilities, of a general. Though flying parties of the barbarians, who incessantly hovered on the banks of the Danube, penetrated sometimes to the confines of Italy and Macedonia, their progress was commonly checked, or their return intercepted, by the Imperial lieutenants.[106] But the great stream of the Gothic hostilities was diverted into a very different channel. The Goths, in their new settlement of the Ukraine, soon became masters of the northern coast of the Euxine: to the south of that inland sea were situated the soft and wealthy provinces of Asia Minor, which possessed all that could attract, and nothing that could resist, a barbarian conqueror.

Conquest of the Bosphorus by the Goths

The banks of the Borysthenes are only sixty miles distant from the narrow entrance[107] of the peninsula of Crim Tartary, known to the ancients under the name of Chersonesus Taurica.[108] On that inhospitable shore, Euripides, embellishing with exquisite art the tales of antiquity, has placed the scene of one of his most affecting tragedies.[109] The bloody sacrifices of Diana, the arrival of Orestes and Pylades, and the triumph of virtue and religion over savage fierceness, serve to represent an historical truth, that the Tauri, the original inhabitants of the peninsula, were in some degree reclaimed from their brutal manners by a gradual intercourse with the Grecian colonies which settled along the maritime coast. The little kingdom of Bosphorus, whose capital was situated on the straits through which the Mæotis communicates itself to the Euxine, was composed of degenerate

[106] See the lives of Claudius, Aurelian, and Probus, in the Augustan History. [Dacia was lost to the Goths about 255 or 256. The event is not recorded, but it is inferred from the fact that no coins or inscriptions in the province date from a later year than 255; see Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte*, v. 220, Hodgkin, i. 57.]

[107] It is about half a league in breadth. Genealogical History of the Tartars, p. 598.

[108] M. de Peyssonel, who had been French consul at Caffa, in his Observations sur les Peuples Barbares, qui ont habité les bords du Danube.

[109] Euripides in Iphigenia in Taurid.

Greeks and half-civilized barbarians. It subsisted as an independent state from the time of the Peloponnesian war,[110] was at last swallowed up by the ambition of Mithridates,[111] and, with the rest of his dominions, sunk under the weight of the Roman arms. From the reign of Augustus,[112] the kings of Bosphorus were the humble, but not useless, allies of the empire. By presents, by arms, and by a slight fortification drawn across the isthmus, they effectually guarded against the roving plunderers of Sarmatia the access of a country which, from its peculiar situation and convenient harbours, commanded the Euxine Sea and Asia Minor.[113] As long as the sceptre was possessed by a lineal succession of kings, they acquitted themselves of their important charge with vigilance and success. Domestic factions, and the fears or private interest of obscure usurpers who seized on the vacant throne, admitted the Goths into the heart of Bosphorus. With the acquisition of a superfluous waste of fertile soil, the conquerors obtained the command of a naval force sufficient to transport their armies to the coast of Asia.[114] The ships used in the navigation of the Euxine were of a very singular construction. They were slight flat-bottomed barks framed of timber only, without the least mixture of iron, and occasionally covered with a shelving roof on the appearance of a tempest.[115] In these floating houses the Goths carelessly trusted themselves to the mercy of an unknown sea, under the conduct of sailors pressed into the service, and whose skill and fidelity were equally suspicious. But the hopes of plunder had banished every idea of danger, and a natural fearlessness of temper supplied in their minds the more rational confidence which is the just result of knowledge and experience. Warriors of such a daring spirit must have often murmured against the cowardice of their guides, who required the strongest assurances of a settled calm before they would venture to embark, and would scarcely ever be tempted to lose sight of the land. Such, at least, is the

who acquire a naval force

[110] Strabo, l. vii. p. 309. The first kings of Bosphorus were the allies of Athens.

[111] Appian in Mithridat. [67].

[112] It was reduced by the arms of Agrippa. Orosius, vi. 21. Eutropius, vii. 9. The Romans once advanced within three days' march of the Tanais. Tacit. Annal. xii. 17.

[113] See the Toxaris of Lucian, if we credit the sincerity and the virtues of the Scythian, who relates a great war of his nation against the kings of Bosphorus.

[114] Zosimus, l. i. p. 28 [31. Coins prove that the lineal succession did not cease before 267 at the earliest.]

[115] Strabo, l. xi. [p. 495]. Tacit. Hist. iii. 47. They were called *Camaræ*.

practice of the modern Turks;[116] and they are probably not inferior in the art of navigation to the ancient inhabitants of Bosphorus.

First naval expedition of the Goths

The fleet of the Goths, leaving the coast of Circassia on the left hand, first appeared before Pityus,[117] the utmost limits of the Roman provinces; a city provided with a convenient port, and fortified with a strong wall. Here they met with a resistance more obstinate than they had reason to expect from the feeble garrison of a distant fortress. They were repulsed; and their disappointment seemed to diminish the terror of the Gothic name. As long as Successianus, an officer of superior rank and merit, defended that frontier, all their efforts were ineffectual; but, as soon as he was removed by Valerian to a more honourable but less important station, they resumed the attack of Pityus; and, by the destruction of that city, obliterated the memory of their former disgrace.[118]

The Goths besiege and take Trebizond

Circling round the eastern extremity of the Euxine Sea, the navigation from Pityus to Trebizond is about three hundred miles.[119] The course of the Goths carried them in sight of the country of Colchis, so famous by the expedition of the Argonauts; and they even attempted, though without success, to pillage a rich temple at the mouth of the river Phasis. Trebizond, celebrated in the retreat of the Ten Thousand as an ancient colony of Greeks,[120] derived its wealth and splendour from the munificence of the emperor Hadrian, who had constructed an artificial port on a coast left destitute by nature of secure harbours.[121] The city was large and populous; a double enclosure of walls seemed to defy the fury of the Goths, and the usual garrison had been strengthened by a reinforcement of ten thousand men. But there are not any advantages capable of supplying the absence of discipline and vigilance. The numerous garrison of Trebizond, dissolved in riot and luxury, disdained to guard their impregnable fortifications. The Goths soon discovered the supine negligence of the besieged, erected

[116] See a very natural picture of the Euxine navigation, in the xvith letter of Tournefort.

[117] Arrian places the frontier garrison at Dioscurias, or Sebastopolis, forty-four miles to the east of Pityus. The garrison of Phasis consisted in his time of only four hundred foot. See the Periplus of the Euxine. [For the Gothic invasions see Hodgkin, Italy and her Invaders, i. ch. 1.]

[118] Zosimus, l. i. p. 30. [256 A.D.]

[119] Arrian (in Periplo Maris Euxin. p. 130 [27]) calls the distance 2610 stadia.

[120] Xenophon, Anabasis, l. iv. p. 348. Edit. Hutchinson [c. 8].

[121] Arrian, p. 129 [26]. The general observation is Tournefort's.

a lofty pile of fascines, ascended the walls in the silence of the night, and entered the defenceless city, sword in hand. A general massacre of the people ensued, whilst the affrighted soldiers escaped through the opposite gates of the town. The most holy temples, and the most splendid edifices, were involved in a common destruction. The booty that fell into the hands of the Goths was immense: the wealth of the adjacent countries had been deposited in Trebizond, as in a secure place of refuge. The number of captives was incredible, as the victorious barbarians ranged without opposition through the extensive province of Pontus.[122] The rich spoils of Trebizond filled a great fleet of ships that had been found in the port. The robust youth of the sea coast were chained to the oar; and the Goths, satisfied with the success of their first naval expedition, returned in triumph to their new establishments in the kingdom of Bosphorus.[123]

The second expedition of the Goths was undertaken with greater powers of men and ships; but they steered a different course, and, disdaining the exhausted provinces of Pontus, followed the western coast of the Euxine, passed before the wide mouths of the Borysthenes, the Dniester, and the Danube, and, increasing their fleet by the capture of a great number of fishing barques, they approached the narrow outlet through which the Euxine Sea pours its waters into the Mediterranean, and divides the continents of Europe and Asia. The garrison of Chalcedon was encamped near the temple of Jupiter Urius, on a promontory that commanded the entrance of the strait: and so inconsiderable were the dreaded invasions of the barbarians, that this body of troops surpassed in number the Gothic army. But it was in numbers alone that they surpassed it. They deserted with precipitation their advantageous post, and abandoned the town of Chalcedon, most plentifully stored with arms and money, to the discretion of the conquerors. Whilst they hesitated whether they should prefer the sea or land, Europe or Asia, for the scene of their hostilities, a perfidious fugitive pointed out Nicomedia, once the capital of the kings of Bithynia, as a rich and easy conquest. He guided the march, which was only sixty miles from the camp of Chalcedon,[124] directed the resistless attack, and partook of the booty; for the Goths had learned sufficient

The second expedition of the Goths

They plunder the cities of Bithynia

[122] See an epistle of Gregory Thaumaturgus, bishop of Neo-Cæsarea, quoted by Mascou, v. 37.

[123] Zosimus, l. i. p. 32, 33 [35].

[124] Itiner. Hierosolym, p. 572. Wesseling.

policy to reward the traitor whom they detested. Nice, Prusa, Apamæa, Cius, cities that had sometimes rivalled, or imitated, the splendour of Nicomedia, were involved in the same calamity, which, in a few weeks, raged without control through the whole province of Bithynia. Three hundred years of peace, enjoyed by the soft inhabitants of Asia, had abolished the exercise of arms, and removed the apprehension of danger. The ancient walls were suffered to moulder away, and all the revenue of the most opulent cities was reserved for the construction of baths, temples, and theatres.[125]

Retreat of the Goths

When the city of Cyzicus withstood the utmost effort of Mithridates,[126] it was distinguished by wise laws, a naval power of two hundred galleys, and three arsenals,—of arms, of military engines, and of corn.[127] It was still the seat of wealth and luxury; but of its ancient strength nothing remained except the situation, in a little island of the Propontis, connected with the continent of Asia only by two bridges. From the recent sack of Prusa, the Goths advanced within eighteen miles[128] of the city, which they had devoted to destruction; but the ruin of Cyzicus was delayed by a fortunate accident. The season was rainy, and the lake Apolloniates, the reservoir of all the springs of Mount Olympus, rose to an uncommon height. The little river of Rhyndacus, which issues from the lake, swelled into a broad and rapid stream and stopped the progress of the Goths. Their retreat to the maritime city of Heraclea, where the fleet had probably been stationed, was attended by a long train of waggons laden with the spoils of Bithynia, and was marked by the flames of Nice and Nicomedia, which they wantonly burnt.[129] Some obscure hints are mentioned of a doubtful combat that secured their retreat.[130] But even a complete victory would have been of little moment, as the approach of the autumnal equinox summoned them to hasten their return. To navigate the Euxine before the month of May, or after that of September, is esteemed by the modern Turks the most unquestionable instance of rashness and folly.[131]

[125] Zosimus, l. i. p. 32, 33 [35].

[126] He besieged the place with 400 galleys, 150,000 foot, and a numerous cavalry. See Plutarch in Lucul. [9]. Appian in Mithridat. [72]. Cicero pro Lege Manilia, c. 8.

[127] Strabo, l. xii. p. 573.

[128] Pocock's Descriptions of the East, l. ii. c. 23, 24.

[129] Zosimus, l. i. p. 33 [35].

[130] Syncellus [i. p. 717, ed. Bonn] tells an unintelligible story of Prince *Odenathus*, who defeated the Goths, and who was killed by Prince *Odenathus*.

[131] Voyages de Chardin. tom. i. p. 45. He sailed with the Turks from Constantinople to Caffa.

When we are informed that the third fleet, equipped by the Goths in the ports of Bosphorus, consisted of five hundred sail of ships,[132] our ready imagination instantly computes and multiplies the formidable armament; but, as we are assured by the judicious Strabo,[133] that the piratical vessels used by the barbarians of Pontus and the Lesser Scythia, were not capable of containing more than twenty-five or thirty men, we may safely affirm that fifteen thousand warriors at the most embarked in this great expedition. Impatient of the limits of the Euxine, they steered their destructive course from the Cimmerian to the Thracian Bosphorus. When they had almost gained the middle of the Straits, they were suddenly driven back to the entrance of them; till a favourable wind, springing up the next day, carried them in a few hours into the placid sea, or rather lake, of the Propontis.[134] Their landing on the little island of Cyzicus was attended with the ruin of that ancient and noble city. From thence issuing again through the narrow passage of the Hellespont, they pursued their winding navigation amidst the numerous islands scattered over the Archipelago or the Ægean Sea. The assistance of captives and deserters must have been very necessary to pilot their vessels, and to direct their various incursions, as well on the coast of Greece as on that of Asia. At length the Gothic fleet anchored in the port of Piræus, five miles distant from Athens,[135] which had attempted to make some preparations for a vigorous defence. Cleodamus, one of the engineers employed by the emperor's orders to fortify the maritime cities against the Goths, had already begun to repair the ancient walls fallen to decay since the time of Sylla.[136] The efforts of his skill were ineffectual, and the barbarians became masters of the native seat of the muses and the arts. But, while the conquerors abandoned themselves to the licence of plunder and intemperance,[137] their fleet, that lay with a slender guard in the harbour of Piræus, was unexpectedly attacked by the brave Dexippus, who, flying with the engineer Cleodamus from

Third naval expedition of the Goths

They pass the Bosphorus and the Hellespont

[132] Syncellus (p. 382) [ib.] speaks of this expedition as undertaken by the Heruli.

[133] Strabo, l. xi. p. 495.

[134] [Gibbon omits to mention that the Goths sustained a severe naval defeat, before they entered the Propontis, at the hands of Venerianus. Hist. Aug. xxiii. 13.]

[135] Plin. Hist. Natur. iii. 7 [error for iv. 7].

[136] [The renewed wall was known as the wall of Valerian. See Zosimus, i. 29. A wall was built at the same time across the Isthmus. For this invasion of Greece, see Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Athen im Mittelalter*, i. 16 *sqq.*]

[137] [The monuments of Athens seem on this occasion to have been spared.]

the sack of Athens, collected a hasty band of volunteers, peasants as well as soldiers, and in some measure avenged the calamities of his country.[138]

ravage Greece, and threaten Italy

But this exploit, whatever lustre it might shed on the declining age of Athens, served rather to irritate than to subdue the undaunted spirit of the northern invaders. A general conflagration blazed out at the same time in every district of Greece.[139] Thebes and Argos, Corinth and Sparta, which had formerly waged such memorable wars against each other, were now unable to bring an army into the field, or even to defend their ruined fortifications. The rage of war, both by land and by sea, spread from the eastern point of Sunium to the western coast of Epirus. The Goths had already advanced within sight of Italy, when the approach of such imminent danger awakened the indolent Gallienus from his dream of pleasure. The emperor appeared in arms; and his presence seems to have checked the ardour, and to have divided the strength, of the enemy. Naulobatus, a chief of the Heruli, accepted an honourable capitulation, entered with a large body of his countrymen into the service of Rome, and was invested with the ornaments of the consular dignity, which had never before been profaned by the hands of a barbarian.[140] Great numbers of the Goths, disgusted with the perils and hardships of a tedious voyage, broke into Mæsia, with a design of forcing their way over the Danube to their settlements in the Ukraine. The wild attempt would have proved inevitable destruction, if the discord of the Roman generals had not opened to the barbarians the means of an escape.[141] The small remainder of this destroying host returned on board their vessels, and, measuring back their way through the Helles-

Their divisions and retreat

[138] Hist. August. p. 181 [xxiii. 13]. Victor [Cæsar.] c. 33. Orosius, vii. 42. Zosimus, l. i. p. 35 [39]. Zonaras, l. xii. 635 [26]. Syncellus, p. 382 [i. p. 717, ed. Bonn]. It is not without some attention that we can explain and conciliate their imperfect hints. We can still discover some traces of the partiality of Dexippus, in the relation of his own and his countrymen's exploits. [Frag. 21. An epigram on Dexippus as a scholar, not as a deliverer, has been preserved. C.I.A. iii. 1, No. 716.]

[139] [Gibbon has omitted to mention the attack of the Goths on Thessalonica, which almost proved fatal to that city. This incident spread terror throughout the Illyric peninsula, and thoroughly frightened the government. It was probably the immediate cause of the restoration of the walls of Athens and the other fortifications in Greece. See Zosimus, i. 29, and perhaps Eusebius in Müller, F.H.G. v. 1, 21.]

[140] Syncellus, p. 382 [ib.]. This body of Heruli was for a long time faithful and famous.

[141] Claudius, who commanded on the Danube, thought with propriety and acted with spirit. His colleague was jealous of his fame. Hist. August. p. 181 [xxiii. 14].

pont and the Bosphorus, ravaged in their passage the shores of Troy, whose fame, immortalized by Homer, will probably survive the memory of the Gothic conquests. As soon as they found themselves in safety within the bason of the Euxine, they landed at Anchialus in Thrace, near the foot of Mount Hæmus, and, after all their toils, indulged themselves in the use of those pleasant and salutary hot baths. What remained of the voyage was a short and easy navigation.[142] Such was the various fate of this third and greatest of their naval enterprises. It may seem difficult to conceive how the original body of fifteen thousand warriors could sustain the losses and divisions of so bold an adventure. But, as their numbers were gradually wasted by the sword, by shipwrecks, and by the influence of a warm climate, they were perpetually renewed by troops of banditti and deserters, who flocked to the standard of plunder, and by a crowd of fugitive slaves, often of German or Sarmatian extraction, who eagerly seized the glorious opportunity of freedom and revenge. In these expeditions the Gothic nation claimed a superior share of honour and danger; but the tribes that fought under the Gothic banners are sometimes distinguished and sometimes confounded in the imperfect histories of that age; and, as the barbarian fleets seemed to issue from the mouth of the Tanais, the vague but familiar appellation of Scythians was frequently bestowed on the mixed multitude.[143]

Ruin of the temple of Ephesus

In the general calamities of mankind the death of an individual, however exalted, the ruin of an edifice, however famous, are passed over with careless inattention. Yet we cannot forget that the temple of Diana at Ephesus, after having risen with increasing splendour from seven repeated misfortunes,[144] was finally burnt by the Goths in their third naval invasion. The arts of Greece and the wealth of Asia had conspired to erect that sacred and magnificent structure. It was supported by an hundred and twenty-seven marble columns of the Ionic order; they were the gifts of devout monarchs, and each was sixty feet high. The altar was adorned with the masterly sculptures of Praxiteles, who had, perhaps, selected from the favourite legends of the place the birth of the divine children of Latona,

[142] Jornandes, c. 20

[143] Zosimus, and the Greeks (as the author of the Philopatris [see below, p. 340, note 81]), give the name of Scythians to those whom Jornandes, and the Latin writers, constantly represent as Goths.

[144] Hist. August. p. 178 [xxiii. 6]. Jornandes, c. 20. [The chronology is extremely doubtful. It seems more probable that Ephesus suffered in an earlier invasion. See Hodgkin, i. 62.]

the concealment of Apollo after the slaughter of the Cyclops, and the clemency of Bacchus to the vanquished Amazons.[145] Yet the length of the temple of Ephesus was only four hundred and twenty-five feet, about two thirds the measure of the church of St. Peter's at Rome.[146] In the other dimensions, it was still more inferior to that sublime production of modern architecture. The spreading arms of a Christian cross require a much greater breadth than the oblong temples of the Pagans; and the boldest artists of antiquity would have been startled at the proposal of raising in the air a dome of the size and proportions of the Pantheon. The temple of Diana was, however, admired as one of the wonders of the world. Successive empires, the Persian, the Macedonian, and the Roman, had revered its sanctity, and enriched its splendour.[147] But the rude savages of the Baltic were destitute of a taste for the elegant arts, and they despised the ideal terrors of a foreign superstition.[148]

Conduct of the Goths at Athens

Another circumstance is related of these invasions, which might deserve our notice were it not justly to be suspected as the fanciful conceit of a recent sophist. We are told that in the sack of Athens the Goths had collected all the libraries, and were on the point of setting fire to this funeral pile of Grecian learning, had not one of their chiefs, of more refined policy than his brethren, dissuaded them from the design, by the profound observation, that as long as the Greeks were addicted to the study of books they would never apply themselves to the exercise of arms.[149] The sagacious counsellor (should the truth of the fact be admitted) reasoned like an ignorant barbarian. In the most polite and powerful nations genius of every kind has displayed itself about the same period; and the age of science has generally been the age of military virtue and success.

Conquest of Armenia by the Persians

IV. The new sovereigns of Persia, Artaxerxes and his son

[145] Strabo, l. xiv. p. 640. Vitruvius, l. i. c. 1, præfat. l. vii. Tacit. Annal. iii. 71. Plin. Hist. Nat. xxxvi. 14.

[146] The length of St. Peter's is 840 Roman palms, each palm is a very little short of nine English inches. See Greave's Miscellanies, vol. 1, p. 233; On the Roman foot.

[147] The policy however of the Romans induced them to abridge the extent of the sanctuary or asylum, which by successive privileges had spread itself two stadia round the temple. Strabo, l. xiv. p. 641. Tacit. Annal. iii. 60, &c.

[148] They offered no sacrifices to the Grecians' gods. See Epistol. Gregor. Thaumat.

[149] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 635 [26]. Such an anecdote was perfectly suited to the taste of Montaigne. He makes use of it in his agreeable Essay on Pedantry, l. i. c. 24. [Compare Anon. Continuation of Dion Cassius, in Müller, F.H.G. iv. p. 196.]

Sapor, had triumphed (as we have already seen) over the house of Arsaces. Of the many princes of that ancient race, Chosroes, king of Armenia, had alone preserved both his life and his independence. He defended himself by the natural strength of his country; by the perpetual resort of fugitives and malcontents; by the alliance of the Romans; and, above all, by his own courage. Invincible in arms, during a thirty years' war, he was assassinated by the emissaries of Sapor, king of Persia. The patriotic satraps of Armenia, who asserted the freedom and dignity of the crown, implored the protection of Rome in favour of Tiridates, the lawful heir. But the son of Chosroes was an infant, the allies were at a distance, and the Persian monarch advanced towards the frontier at the head of an irresistible force. Young Tiridates, the future hope of his country, was saved by the fidelity of a servant, and Armenia continued above twenty-seven years a reluctant province of the great monarchy of Persia.[150] Elated with this easy conquest, and presuming on the distresses or the degeneracy of the Romans, Sapor obliged the strong garrisons of Carrhæ and Nisibis to surrender, and spread devastation and terror on either side of the Euphrates.

Valerian marches into the East

The loss of an important frontier, the ruin of a faithful and natural ally, and the rapid success of Sapor's ambition, affected Rome with a deep sense of the insult as well as of the danger. Valerian flattered himself that the vigilance of his lieutenants would sufficiently provide for the safety of the Rhine and of the Danube; but he resolved, notwithstanding his advanced age, to march in person to the defence of the Euphrates. During his progress through Asia Minor, the naval enterprises of the Goths were suspended, and the afflicted province enjoyed a transient and fallacious calm. He passed the Euphrates, encountered the Persian monarch near the walls of Edessa, was vanquished, and taken prisoner by Sapor. The particulars of that great event are darkly and imperfectly represented; yet, by the glimmering light which is afforded us, we may discover a long series of imprudence, of error, and of deserved misfortunes on the side of the Roman emperor. He reposed an implicit confidence in Macrianus, his Prætorian præfect.[151] That worthless

Is defeated and taken prisoner by Sapor, King of Persia, A.D. 260

[150] Moses Chorenensis, l. ii. c. 71, 73, 74. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 628 [21]. The authentic relation of the Armenian historian serves to rectify the confused account of the Greek. The latter talks of the children of Tiridates, who at that time was himself an infant. [The succession of Tiridates was resisted by his uncle Artavasdes, who then ruled in Armenia as vassal of Sapor.]

[151] Hist. August. p. 191 [xxiv. 11]. As Macrianus was an enemy to the Christians, they charged him with being a magician. [There seems no reason

minister rendered his master formidable only to the oppressed subjects, and contemptible to the enemies, of Rome.[152] By his weak or wicked counsels the Imperial army was betrayed into a situation where valour and military skill were equally unavailing.[153] The vigorous attempt of the Romans to cut their way through the Persian host was repulsed with great slaughter;[154] and Sapor, who encompassed the camp with superior numbers, patiently waited till the increasing rage of famine and pestilence had ensured his victory. The licentious murmurs of the legions soon accused Valerian as the cause of their calamities; their seditious clamours demanded an instant capitulation. An immense sum of gold was offered to purchase the permission of a disgraceful retreat. But the Persian, conscious of his superiority, refused the money with disdain; and, detaining the deputies, advanced in order of battle to the foot of the Roman rampart, and insisted on a personal conference with the emperor. Valerian was reduced to the necessity of intrusting his life and dignity to the faith of an enemy. The interview ended as it was natural to expect. The emperor was made a prisoner, and his astonished troops laid down their arms.[155] In such a moment of triumph, the pride and policy of Sapor prompted him to fill the vacant throne with a successor entirely dependent on his pleasure. Cyriades, an obscure fugitive of Antioch, stained with every vice, was chosen to dishonour the Roman purple; and the will of the Persian victor could not fail of being ratified by the acclamations, however reluctant, of the captive army.[156]

Sapor overruns Syria, Cilicia, and Cappadocia.

The Imperial slave was eager to secure the favour of his master by an act of treason to his native country. He conducted Sapor over the Euphrates, and, by the way of Chalcis, to the metropolis of the East. So rapid were the motions of the Persian cavalry, that, if we may credit a very judicious historian,[157] the city of Antioch was surprised when the idle multi-

to impute any fault to Macrianus in this disaster. He appears to have been an able officer but unfortunately an invalid. For the defeat of Valerian and the chronology, see Appendix 17.]

[152] Zosimus, l. i. p. 33 [36].

[153] Hist. August. p. 174 [xxii. 32].

[154] Victor in Cæsar. [32]. Eutropius, ix. 7.

[155] Zosimus, l. i. p. 33 [36]. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 630 [23]. Peter Patricius in the Excerpta Legat. p. 29.

[156] Hist. August. p. 185 [xxiv. 1]. The reign of Cyriades appears in that collection prior to the death of Valerian; but I have preferred a probable series of events to the doubtful chronology of a most inaccurate writer. [But see Appendix 17.]

[157] The sack of Antioch, anticipated by some historians, is assigned, by the decisive testimony of Ammianus Marcellinus, to the reign of Gallienus, xxiii. 5.

tude was fondly gazing on the amusements of the theatre. The splendid buildings of Antioch, private as well as public, were either pillaged or destroyed; and the numerous inhabitants were put to the sword or led away into captivity.[158] The tide of devastation was stopped for a moment by the resolution of the high priest of Emesa. Arrayed in his sacerdotal robes he appeared at the head of a great body of fanatic peasants, armed only with slings, and defended his god and his property from the sacrilegious hands of the followers of Zoroaster.[159] But the ruin of Tarsus, and of many other cities, furnishes a melancholy proof that, except in this singular instance, the conquest of Syria and Cilicia scarcely interrupted the progress of the Persian arms. The advantages of the narrow passes of Mount Taurus were abandoned, in which an invader whose principal force consisted in his cavalry would have been engaged in a very unequal combat: and Sapor was admitted to form the siege of Cæsarea, the capital of Cappadocia; a city, though of the second rank, which was supposed to contain four hundred thousand inhabitants. Demosthenes commanded in the place, not so much by the commission of the emperor as in the voluntary defence of his country. For a long time he deferred its fate; and, when at last Cæsarea was betrayed by the perfidy of a physician, he cut his way through the Persians, who had been ordered to exert their utmost diligence to take him alive. This heroic chief escaped the power of a foe who might either have honoured or punished his obstinate valour; but many thousands of his fellow-citizens were involved in a general massacre, and Sapor is accused of treating his prisoners with wanton and unrelenting cruelty.[160] Much should undoubtedly be allowed for national animosity, much for humbled pride and impotent revenge; yet, upon the whole, it is certain that the same prince who, in Armenia, had displayed the mild aspect of a legislator, showed himself to the Romans under the stern features of a conqueror. He despaired of making any permanent establishment in the empire, and sought only to leave behind him a wasted desert, whilst he transported into Persia the people and the treasures of the provinces.[161]

[158] Zosimus, l. i. p. 35 [36].

[159] John Malala, tom. i. p. 391 [p. 296, ed. Bonn]. He corrupts this probable event by some fabulous circumstances.

[160] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 630 [23]. Deep valleys were filled up with the slain. Crowds of prisoners were driven to water like beasts, and many perished for want of food.

[161] Zosimus, l. i. p. 25 [28], asserts that Sapor, had he not preferred spoil to conquest, might have remained master of Asia.

Boldness and success of Odenathus against Sapor

At a time when the East trembled at the name of Sapor, he received a present not unworthy of the greatest kings—a long train of camels laden with the most rare and valuable merchandises. The rich offering was accompanied with an epistle, respectful but not servile, from Odenathus, one of the noblest and most opulent senators of Palmyra. "Who is this Odenathus" (said the haughty victor, and he commanded that the presents should be cast into the Euphrates), "that he thus insolently presumes to write to his lord? If he entertains a hope of mitigating his punishment, let him fall prostrate before the foot of our throne, with his hands bound behind his back. Should he hesitate, swift destruction shall be poured on his head, on his whole race, and on his country." [162] The desperate extremity to which the Palmyrenian was reduced called into action all the latent powers of his soul. He met Sapor; but he met him in arms. Infusing his own spirit into a little army collected from the villages of Syria,[163] and the tents of the desert,[164] he hovered round the Persian host, harassed their retreat, carried off part of the treasure, and, what was dearer than any treasure, several of the women of the Great King; who was at last obliged to repass the Euphrates with some marks of haste and confusion.[165] By this exploit Odenathus laid the foundations of his future fame and fortunes. The majesty of Rome, oppressed by a Persian, was protected by a Syrian or Arab of Palmyra.

Treatment of Valerian

The voice of history, which is often little more than the organ of hatred or flattery, reproaches Sapor with a proud abuse of the rights of conquest. We are told that Valerian, in chains, but invested with the Imperial purple, was exposed to the multitude, a constant spectacle of fallen greatness; and that, whenever the Persian monarch mounted on horseback, he

[162] Peter Patricius in Excerpt. Leg. p. 29 [frag. 10, Müller, F.H.G. iv. Septimius Odænathus had been made a *consularis* by Valerian before April 258. See Waddington-Le Bas iii. 2602].

[163] Syrorum agrestium manû. Sextus Rufus, c. 23. Rufus, Victor, the Augustan History (p. 192 [xxiv. 14]) and several inscriptions agree in making Odenathus a citizen of Palmyra. [Palmyra had been made a colonia by Severus. As a great commercial town, its policy was to preserve neutrality between the powers of the East and the West, and, while the Parthian realm lasted, this was feasible. But the ambition of the new Persian monarchy forced Palmyra to take a decided step, and either attach itself to the Empire or submit to Sapor. This step was taken by Odænathus.]

[164] He possessed so powerful an interest among the wandering tribes, that Procopius (Bell. Persic. l. ii. c. 5) and John Malala (tom. i. p. 391 [392; p. 297, ed. Bonn]) style him Prince of the Saracens.

[165] Peter Patricius, p. 25 [frag. 11. See also Zonaras, xii. 23; Zosimus, i. 39; Syncellus, i. 716 (ed. Bonn)].

placed his foot on the neck of a Roman emperor. Notwithstanding all the remonstrances of his allies, who repeatedly advised him to remember the vicissitude of fortune, to dread the returning power of Rome, and to make his illustrious captive the pledge of peace, not the object of insult, Sapor still remained inflexible. When Valerian sunk under the weight of shame and grief, his skin, stuffed with straw, and formed into the likeness of a human figure, was preserved for ages in the most celebrated temple of Persia; a more real monument of triumph than the fancied trophies of brass and marble so often erected by Roman vanity.[166] The tale is moral and pathetic, but the truth of it may very fairly be called in question. The letters still extant from the princes of the East to Sapor are manifest forgeries;[167] nor is it natural to suppose that a jealous monarch should, even in the person of a rival, thus publicly degrade the majesty of kings. Whatever treatment the unfortunate Valerian might experience in Persia, it is at least certain that the only emperor of Rome who had ever fallen into the hands of the enemy languished away his life in hopeless captivity.

Character and administration of Gallienus

The Emperor Gallienus, who had long supported with impatience the censorial severity of his father and colleague, received the intelligence of his misfortunes with secret pleasure, and avowed indifference. "I knew that my father was a mortal," said he, "and, since he has acted as becomes a brave man, I am satisfied." Whilst Rome lamented the fate of her sovereign, the savage coldness of his son was extolled by the servile courtiers as the perfect firmness of a hero and a stoic.[168] It is difficult to paint the light, the various, the inconstant character of Gallienus, which he displayed without constraint as soon as he became sole possessor of the empire. In every art that he attempted his lively genius enabled him to succeed; and, as his genius was destitute of judgment, he attempted every art, except the important ones of war and government. He was a master of several curious but useless sciences, a ready

[166] The Pagan writers lament, the Christian insult, the misfortunes of Valerian. Their various testimonies are accurately collected by Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 739, &c. So little has been preserved of Eastern history before Mahomet, that the modern Persians are totally ignorant of the victory of Sapor, an event so glorious to their nation. See Bibliothèque Orientale.

[167] One of these epistles is from Artavasdes, king of Armenia: since Armenia was then a province to Persia, the king, the kingdom, and the epistle must be fictitious.

[168] See his life in the Augustan History.

orator, an elegant poet,[169] a skilful gardener, an excellent cook, and most contemptible prince. When the great emergencies of the state required his presence and attention, he was engaged in conversation with the philosopher Plotinus,[170] wasting his time in trifling or licentious pleasures, preparing his initiation to the Grecian mysteries, or soliciting a place in the Areopagus of Athens. His profuse magnificence insulted the general poverty; the solemn ridicule of his triumphs impressed a deeper sense of the public disgrace.[171] The repeated intelligence of invasions, defeats, and rebellions, he received with a careless smile; and singling out, with affected contempt, some particular production of the lost province, he carelessly asked, whether Rome must be ruined, unless it was supplied with linen from Egypt, and Arras cloth from Gaul? There were, however, a few short moments in the life of Gallienus when, exasperated by some recent injury, he suddenly appeared the intrepid soldier and the cruel tyrant; till, satiated with blood or fatigued by resistance, he insensibly sunk into the natural mildness and indolence of his character.[172]

The thirty tyrants

At a time when the reins of government were held with so loose a hand, it is not surprising that a crowd of usurpers should start up in every province of the empire, against the son of Valerian. It was probably some ingenious fancy, of comparing

[169] There is still extant a very pretty Epithalamium, composed by Gallienus, for the nuptials of his nephews [Hist. August. xxiii. 11].

Ite ait, O Juvenes, pariter sudate medullis
Omnibus, inter vos; non murmura vestra columbæ,
Brachia non hederæ, non vincant oscula conchæ.

[170] He was on the point of giving Plotinus a ruined city of Campania to try the experiment of realizing Plato's Republic. See the Life of Plotinus, by Porphyry, in Fabricius's Biblioth. Græc. l. iv.

[171] A medal which bears the head of Gallienus has perplexed the antiquarians by its legend and reverse; the former *Gallienæ Augustæ*, the latter *Ubique Pax* [Eckhel, vii. 413]. M. Spanheim supposes that the coin was struck by some of the enemies of Gallienus, and was designed as a severe satire on that effeminate prince. But, as the use of irony may seem unworthy of the gravity of the Roman mint, M. de Vallemont has deduced from a passage of Trebellius Pollio (Hist. August. p. 198) an ingenious and natural solution. Galliena was first cousin to the emperor. By delivering Africa from the usurper Celsus, she deserved the title of Augusta. [Recent authorities however accept the explanation of Spanheim.] On a medal in the French king's collection, we read a similar inscription of *Faustina Augusta* round the head of Marcus Aurelius. With regard to the *Ubique Pax*, it is easily explained by the vanity of Gallienus, who seized, perhaps, the occasion of some momentary calm. See Nouvelles de la République des Lettres Janvier, 1700, p. 21-34.

[172] This singular character has, I believe, been fairly transmitted to us. The reign of his immediate successor was short and busy, and the historians who wrote before the elevation of the family of Constantine could not have the most remote interest to misrepresent the character of Gallienus. [But see Appendix 1.]

the thirty tyrants of Rome with the thirty tyrants of Athens, that induced the writers of the Augustan history to select that celebrated number, which has been gradually received into a popular appellation.[173] But in every light the parallel is idle and defective. What resemblance can we discover between a council of thirty persons, the united oppressors of a single city, and an uncertain list of independent rivals, who rose and fell in irregular succession through the extent of a vast empire? Nor can the number of thirty be completed unless we include in the account the women and children who were honoured with the Imperial title. The reign of Gallienus, distracted as it was, produced only nineteen pretenders to the throne: Cyriades, Macrianus, Balista, Odenathus, and Zenobia in the East; in Gaul and the western provinces, Posthumus, Lollianus, Victorinus and his mother Victoria, Marius, and Tetricus. In Illyricum and the confines of the Danube, Ingenuus, Regillianus and Aureolus; in Pontus,[174] Saturninus; in Isauria, Trebellianus; Piso in Thessaly; Valens in Achaia; Æmilianus in Egypt; and Celsus in Africa. To illustrate the obscure monuments of the life and death of each individual would prove a laborious task, alike barren of instruction and amusement. We may content ourselves with investigating some general characters, that most strongly mark the condition of the times and the manners of the men, their pretensions, their motives, their fate, and the destructive consequences of their usurpation.[175]

Their real number was no more than nineteen

It is sufficiently known that the odious appellation of *Tyrant* was often employed by the ancients to express the illegal seizure of supreme power, without any reference to the abuse of it. Several of the pretenders who raised the standard of rebellion against the emperor Gallienus were shining models of virtue, and almost all possessed a considerable share of vigour and ability. Their merit had recommended them to the favour of Valerian, and gradually promoted them to the most important commands of the empire. The generals who assumed the title of Augustus were either respected by their troops for their able conduct and severe discipline, or admired for valour and success in war, or beloved for frankness and generosity. The field of victory was often the scene of their election; and even the

Character and merit of the tyrants

[173] Pollio expresses the most minute anxiety to complete the number.

[174] The place of his reign is somewhat doubtful; but there *was* a tyrant in Pontus, and we are acquainted with the seat of all the others. [Hist. Aug. xxiv. 29, 1 is here referred to. See Appendix 18.]

[175] Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 1163, reckons them somewhat differently.

armourer Marius, the most contemptible of all the candidates for the purple, was distinguished however by intrepid courage, matchless strength, and blunt honesty.[176] His mean and recent trade cast, indeed, an air of ridicule on his elevation; but his birth could not be more obscure than was that of the greater part of his rivals, who were born of peasants, and enlisted in the army as private soldiers. In times of confusion every active genius finds the place assigned him by nature; in a general state of war military merit is the road to glory and to greatness. Of the nineteen tyrants Tetricus only was a senator; Piso alone was a noble. The blood of Numa, through twenty-eight successive generations, ran in the veins of Calphurnius Piso,[177] who, by female alliances, claimed a right of exhibiting in his house the images of Crassus and of the great Pompey.[178] His ancestors had been repeatedly dignified with all the honours which the commonwealth could bestow; and, of all the ancient families of Rome, the Calphurnian alone had survived the tyranny of the Cæsars. The personal qualities of Piso added new lustre to his race. The usurper Valens, by whose order he was killed, confessed, with deep remorse, that even an enemy ought to have respected the sanctity of Piso; and, although he died in arms against Gallienus, the senate, with the emperor's generous permission, decreed the triumphal ornaments to the memory of so virtuous a rebel.[179]

Their obscure birth

The lieutenants of Valerian were grateful to the father, whom they esteemed. They disdained to serve the luxurious indolence of his unworthy son. The throne of the Roman world was unsupported by any principle of loyalty; and treason against such a prince might easily be considered as patriotism to the state. Yet, if we examine with candour the conduct of these usurpers, it will appear that they were much oftener driven into rebellion by their fears than urged to it by their ambition. They

The causes of their rebellion

[176] See the speech of Marius, in the Augustan History, p. 187 [xxiv. 7]. The accidental identity of names was the only circumstance that could tempt Pollio to imitate Sallust.

[177] Vos O Pompilius sanguis! is Horace's address to the Pisos. See Art. Poet. v. 292, with Dacier's and Sanadon's notes.

[178] Tacit. Annal. xv. 48, Hist. i. 15. In the former of these passages we may venture to change *paterna* into *materna*. In every generation from Augustus to Alexander Severus, one or more Pisos appear as consuls. A Piso was deemed worthy of the throne by Augustus (Tacit. Annal. i. 13). A second headed a formidable conspiracy against Nero; and a third was adopted, and declared Cæsar by Galba.

[179] Hist. August. p. 195 [xxiv. 20]. The senate, in a moment of enthusiasm, seems to have presumed on the approbation of Gallienus.

dreaded the cruel suspicions of Gallienus: they equally dreaded the capricious violence of their troops. If the dangerous favour of the army had imprudently declared them deserving of the purple, they were marked for sure destruction; and even prudence would counsel them to secure a short enjoyment of the empire, and rather to try the fortune of war than to expect the hand of an executioner. When the clamour of the soldiers invested the reluctant victims with the ensigns of sovereign authority, they sometimes mourned in secret their approaching fate. "You have lost," said Saturninus, on the day of his elevation, "you have lost a useful commander, and you have made a very wretched emperor."[180]

Their violent deaths

The apprehensions of Saturninus were justified by the repeated experience of revolutions. Of the nineteen tyrants who started up under the reign of Gallienus, there was not one who enjoyed a life of peace, or a natural death. As soon as they were invested with the same fears and ambition which had occasioned their own revolt. Encompassed with domestic conspiracy, military sedition, and civil war, they trembled on the edge of precipices, in which, after a longer or shorter term of anxiety, they were inevitably lost. These precarious monarchs received, however, such honours as the flattery of their respective armies and provinces could bestow; but their claim, founded on rebellion, could never obtain the sanction of law or history. Italy, Rome, and the senate constantly adhered to the cause of Gallienus, and he alone was considered as the sovereign of the empire. That prince condescended indeed to acknowledge the victorious arms of Odenathus, who deserved the honourable distinction by the respectful conduct which he always maintained towards the son of Valerian. With the general applause of the Romans and the consent of Gallienus, the senate conferred the title of Augustus on the brave Palmyrenian; and seemed to intrust him with the government of the East, which he already possessed, in so independent a manner, that, like a private succession, he bequeathed it to his illustrious widow Zenobia.[181]

Fatal consequences of these usurpations

The rapid and perpetual transitions from the cottage to the throne, and from the throne to the grave, might have amused an indifferent philosopher, were it possible for a philosopher to

[180] Hist. August. p. 196 [xxiv. 22].

[181] The association of the brave Palmyrenian was the most popular act of the whole reign of Gallienus. Hist. August. p. 180 [xxiii. 12, 1. The statement is certainly erroneous. See Appendix 19.]

remain indifferent amidst the general calamities of human kind. The election of these precarious emperors, their power and their death, were equally destructive to their subjects and adherents. The price of their fatal elevation was instantly discharged to the troops by an immense donative drawn from the bowels of the exhausted people. However virtuous was their character, however pure their intentions, they found themselves reduced to the hard necessity of supporting their usurpation by frequent acts of rapine and cruelty. When they fell, they involved armies and provinces in their fall. There is still extant a most savage mandate from Gallienus to one of his ministers, after the suppression of Ingenuus, who had assumed the purple in Illyricum. "It is not enough," says that soft but inhuman prince, "that you exterminate such as have appeared in arms: the chance of battle might have served me as effectually. The male sex of every age must be extirpated; provided that, in the execution of the children and old men, you can contrive means to save our reputation. Let every one die who has dropt an expression, who has entertained a thought, against me, against *me*, the son of Valerian, the father and brother of so many princes.[182] Remember that Ingenuus was made emperor: tear, kill, hew in pieces. I write to you with my own hand, and would inspire you with my own feelings."[183] Whilst the public forces of the state were dissipated in private quarrels, the defenceless provinces lay exposed to every invader. The bravest usurpers were compelled by the perplexity of their situation to conclude ignominious treaties with the common enemy, to purchase with oppressive tributes the neutrality or services of the barbarians, and to introduce hostile and independent nations into the heart of the Roman monarchy.[184]

Such were the barbarians, and such the tyrants, who, under the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, dismembered the provinces, and reduced the empire to the lowest pitch of disgrace and ruin, from whence it seemed impossible that it should ever emerge. As far as the barrenness of materials would permit,

[182] Gallienus had given the titles of Cæsar and Augustus to his son Saloninus, slain at Cologne by the usurper Posthumus. A second son of Gallienus succeeded to the name and rank of his elder brother. Valerian, the brother of Gallienus, was also associated to the empire: several other brothers, sisters, nephews, and nieces of the emperor, formed a very numerous royal family. See Tillemont, tom. iii. and M. de Brequigny in the Mémoires de l'Académie, tom. xxxii. p. 262.

[183] Hist. August. p. 188 [xxiv. 8].

[184] Regillianus had some bands of Roxolani in his service; Posthumus a body of Franks. It was perhaps in the character of auxiliaries that the latter introduced themselves into Spain.

we have attempted to trace, with order and perspicuity, the general events of that calamitous period. There still remain some particular facts; I. The disorders of Sicily; II. The tumults of Alexandria; and III. The rebellion of the Isaurians —which may serve to reflect a strong light on the horrid picture.

Disorders of Sicily

I. Whenever numerous troops of banditti, multiplied by success and impunity, publicly defy, instead of eluding, the justice of their country, we may safely infer that the excessive weakness of the government is felt and abused by the lowest ranks of the community. The situation of Sicily preserved it from the barbarians; nor could the disarmed province have supported an usurper. The sufferings of that once flourishing and still fertile island were inflicted by baser hands. A licentious crowd of slaves and peasants reigned for a while over the plundered country, and renewed the memory of the servile wars of more ancient times.[185] Devastations, of which the husbandman was either the victim or the accomplice, must have ruined the agriculture of Sicily; and as the principal estates were the property of the opulent senators of Rome, who often enclosed within a farm the territory of an old republic, it is not improbable that this private injury might affect the capital more deeply than all the conquests of the Goths or the Persians.

Tumults of Alexandria

II. The foundation of Alexandria was a noble design, at once conceived and executed by the son of Philip. The beautiful and regular form of that great city, second only to Rome itself, comprehended a circumference of fifteen miles;[186] it was peopled by three hundred thousand free inhabitants, besides at least an equal number of slaves.[187] The lucrative trade of Arabia and India flowed through the port of Alexandria to the capital and provinces of the empire. Idleness was unknown. Some were employed in blowing of glass, others in weaving of linen, others again in[a] manufacturing the papyrus. Either sex, and every age, was engaged in the pursuits of industry, nor did even the blind or the lame want occupations suited to their condition.[188] But the people of Alexandria, a various mixture of nations, united the vanity and inconstancy of the Greeks with the superstition

[185] The Augustan History, p. 177 [xxiii. 4], calls it *servile bellum*. See Diodor. Sicul. l. xxxiv.

[186] Plin. Hist. Natur. v. 10.

[187] Diodor. Sicul. l. xvii. p. 590. Edit. Wesseling [52].

[188] See a very curious letter of Hadrian in the Augustan History, p. 245 [xxix. 8. Cp. Student's Roman Empire, p. 520.]

[a] [The original text omits, presumably by accident, after *aga*in. Ed.]

and obstinacy of the Egyptians. The most trifling occasion, a transient scarcity of flesh or lentils, the neglect of an accustomed salutation, a mistake of precedency in the public baths, or even a religious dispute,[189] were at any time sufficient to kindle a sedition among that vast multitude, whose resentments were furious and implacable.[190] After the captivity of Valerian and the indolence of his son had relaxed the authority of the laws, the Alexandrians abandoned themselves to the ungoverned rage of their passions, and their unhappy country was the theatre of a civil war, which continued (with a few short and suspicious truces) above twelve years.[191] All intercourse was cut off between the several quarters of the afflicted city, every street was polluted with blood, every building of strength converted into a citadel; nor did the tumults subside till a considerable part of Alexandria was irretrievably ruined. The spacious and magnificent district of Bruchion, with its palaces and musæum, the residence of the kings and philosophers of Egypt, is described above a century afterwards, as already reduced to its present state of a dreary solitude.[192]

Rebellion of the Isaurians

III. The obscure rebellion of Trebellianus, who assumed the purple in Isauria, a petty province of Asia Minor, was attended with strange and memorable consequences. The pageant of royalty was soon destroyed by an officer of Gallienus; but his followers, despairing of mercy, resolved to shake off their allegiance, not only to the emperor but to the empire, and suddenly returned to the savage manners from which they had never perfectly been reclaimed. Their craggy rocks, a branch of the wide-extended Taurus, protected their inaccessible retreat. The tillage of some fertile valleys[193] supplied them with necessaries, and a habit of rapine with the luxuries of life. In the heart of the Roman monarchy, the Isaurians long continued a nation of wild barbarians. Succeeding princes, unable to reduce them to obedience either by arms or policy, were compelled to acknowledge their weakness by surrounding the hostile and independent spot with a strong chain of fortifications,[194] which

[189] Such as the sacrilegious murder of a divine cat. See Diodor. Sicul. l. 1.

[190] Hist. August. p. 195. This long and terrible sedition was first occasioned by a dispute between a soldier and a townsman about a pair of shoes. [Compare the description of Mommsen, Röm. Gesch. v. 582 *sqq.*]

[191] Dionysius apud Euseb. Hist. Eccles. vol. vii. p. [*leg.* c.] 21. Ammian. xxii. 16.

[192] Scaliger Animadver. ad Euseb. Chron. p. 258. Three dissertations of M. Bonamy, in the Mém. de l'Académie, tom. ix.

[193] Strabo, l. xii. p. 569.

[194] Hist. August. p. 197 [xxiv. 25].

often proved insufficient to restrain the incursions of these domestic foes. The Isaurians, gradually extending their territory to the sea coast, subdued the western and mountainous part of Cilicia, formerly the nest of those daring pirates against whom the republic had once been obliged to exert its utmost force, under the conduct of the great Pompey.[195]

Famine and pestilence

Our habits of thinking so fondly connect the order of the universe with the fate of man, that this gloomy period of history has been decorated with inundations, earthquakes, uncommon meteors, preternatural darkness, and a crowd of prodigies fictitious or exaggerated.[196] But a long and general famine was a calamity of a more serious kind. It was the inevitable consequence of rapine and oppression, which extirpated the produce of the present and the hope of future harvests. Famine is almost always followed by epidemical diseases, the effect of scanty and unwholesome food. Other causes must however have contributed to the furious plague which, from the year two hundred and fifty to the year two hundred and sixty-five, raged without interruption in every province, every city, and almost every family of the Roman empire. During some time five thousand persons died daily in Rome; and many towns that had escaped the hands of the barbarians were entirely depopulated.[197]

Diminution of the human species

We have the knowledge of a very curious circumstance, of some use perhaps in the melancholy calculation of human calamities. An exact register was kept at Alexandria of all the citizens entitled to receive the distribution of corn. It was found that the ancient number of those comprised between the ages of forty and seventy had been equal to the whole sum of claimants, from fourteen to fourscore years of age, who remained alive after the reign of Gallienus.[198] Applying this authentic fact to the most correct tables of mortality, it evidently proves that above half the people of Alexandria had perished; and

[195] See Cellarius, Geog. Antiq. tom. ii. p. 137, upon the limits of Isauria.

[196] Hist. August. p. 177 [xxiii. 5].

[197] Hist. August. p. 177 [ib.]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 24 [26]. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 623 [21]. Euseb. Chronicon. Victor in Epitom. Victor in Cæsar. [33]. Eutropius, ix. 5. Orosius, vii. 21. [One of the most significant proofs of the distress of the empire in the reign of Gallienus is the bankruptcy of the government, which resorted to the old expedient of shameless depreciation of the coinage. At the end of his reign the argenteus was merely a coin of base metal washed over with silver. See Finlay, History of Greece, ed. Tozer, vol. i. Appendix ii.]

[198] Euseb. Hist. Eccles. vii. 21. The fact is taken from the Letters of Dionysius, who in the time of those troubles was bishop of Alexandria.

could we venture to extend the analogy to the other provinces, we might suspect that war, pestilence, and famine, had consumed, in a few years, the moiety of the human species.[199]

[199] In a great number of parishes 11,000 persons were found between fourteen and eighty; 5365 between forty and seventy. See Buffon, Histoire Naturelle, tom. ii. p. 590.

CHAPTER XI

Reign of Claudius—Defeat of the Goths—Victories, triumph, and death, of Aurelian

Under the deplorable reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, the empire was oppressed and almost destroyed by the soldiers, the tyrants, and the barbarians. It was saved by a series of great princes, who derived their obscure origin from the martial provinces of Illyricum. Within a period of about thirty years, Claudius, Aurelian, Probus, Diocletian and his colleagues, triumphed over the foreign and domestic enemies of the state, re-established, with the military discipline, the strength of the frontiers, and deserved the glorious title of Restorers of the Roman world.

Aureolus invades Italy, is defeated, and besieged at Milan

The removal of an effeminate tyrant made way for a succession of heroes. The indignation of the people imputed all their calamities to Gallienus, and the far greater part were, indeed, the consequence of his dissolute manners and careless administration. He was even destitute of a sense of honour, which so frequently supplies the absence of public virtue; and, as long as he was permitted to enjoy the possession of Italy, a victory of the barbarians, the loss of a province, or the rebellion of a general, seldom disturbed the tranquil course of his pleasures. At length, A.D. 268 a considerable army, stationed on the Upper Danube, invested with the Imperial purple their leader Aureolus; who, disdaining a confined and barren reign over the mountains of Rhætia, passed the Alps, occupied Milan, threatened Rome, and challenged Gallienus to dispute in the field the sovereignty of Italy. The emperor, provoked by the insult, and alarmed by the instant danger, suddenly exerted that latent vigour wh ch sometimes broke through the indolence of his temper. Forcing himself from the luxury of the palace, he appeared in arms at the head of his legions, and advanced beyond the Po to encounter his competitor. The corrupted name of Pontirolo[1] still preserves

[1] *Pons Aureoli*, thirteen miles from Bergamo, and thirty-two from Milan. See Cluver. Italia Antiq. tom. 1, p. 245. Near this place, in the year 1703, the

the memory of a bridge over the Adda, which, during the action, must have proved an object of the utmost importance to both armies. The Rhætian usurper, after receiving a total defeat and a dangerous wound, retired into Milan. The siege of that great city was immediately formed; the walls were battered with every engine in use among the ancients; and Aureolus, doubtful of his internal strength, and hopeless of foreign succours, already anticipated the fatal consequences of unsuccessful rebellion.

His last resource was an attempt to seduce the loyalty of the besiegers. He scattered libels through their camp, inviting the troops to desert an unworthy master, who sacrificed the public happiness to his luxury, and the lives of his most valuable subjects to the slightest suspicions. The arts of Aureolus diffused fears and discontent among the principal officers of his rival. A conspiracy was formed by Heraclianus, the Prætorian præfect, by Marcian, a general of rank and reputation, and by Cecrops,[2] who commanded a numerous body of Dalmatian guards. The death of Gallienus was resolved, and, notwithstanding their desire of first terminating the siege of Milan, the extreme danger which accompanied every moment's delay obliged them to hasten the execution of their daring purpose. At a late hour of the night, but while the emperor still protracted the pleasures of the table, an alarm was suddenly given that Aureolus, at the head of all his forces, had made a desperate sally from the town; Gallienus, who was never deficient in personal bravery, started from his silken couch, and, without allowing himself time either to put on his armour or to assemble his guards, he mounted on horseback, and rode full speed towards the supposed place of the attack. Encompassed by his declared or concealed enemies, he soon, amidst the nocturnal tumult, received a mortal dart from an uncertain hand. Before he expired, a patriotic sentiment rising in the mind of Gallienus induced him to name a deserving successor, and it was his last request that the Imperial ornaments should be delivered to Claudius, who then commanded a detached army in the neighbourhood of Pavia. The report at least was diligently propagated, and the order cheerfully obeyed by the conspirators, who had already agreed to place Claudius on the throne. On the first news of the emperor's death, the troops

A.D. 268, March 20 Death of Gallienus

obstinate battle of Cassano was fought between the French and Austrians. The excellent relation of the Chevalier de Folard, who was present, gives a very distinct idea of the ground. See Polybe de Folard, tom. 3, p. 223-248.

[2] [Cecropius is the name, Hist. Aug. xxiii. 14.]

expressed some suspicion and resentment, till the one was removed and the other assuaged by a donative of twenty pieces of gold to each soldier. They then ratified the election, and acknowledged the merit, of their new sovereign.[3]

Character and elevation of the emperor Claudius

The obscurity which covered the origin of Claudius, though it was afterwards embellished by some flattering fictions,[4] sufficiently betrays the meanness of his birth. We can only discover that he was a native of one of the provinces bordering on the Danube; that his youth was spent in arms, and that his modest valour attracted the favour and confidence of Decius. The senate and people already considered him as an excellent officer, equal to the most important trusts; and censured the inattention of Valerian, who suffered him to remain in the subordinate station of a tribune. But it was not long before that emperor distinguished the merit of Claudius, by declaring him general and chief of the Illyrian frontier, with the command of all the troops in Thrace, Mæsia, Dacia, Pannonia, and Dalmatia, the appointments of the præfect of Egypt, the establishment of the proconsul of Africa, and the sure prospect of the consulship. By his victories over the Goths, he deserved from the senate the honour of a statue and excited the jealous apprehensions of Gallienus. It was impossible that a soldier could esteem so dissolute a sovereign, nor is it easy to conceal a just contempt. Some unguarded expressions which dropped from Claudius were officiously transmitted to the royal ear. The emperor's answer to an officer of confidence describes in very lively colours his own character and that of the times. "There is not anything capable of giving me more serious concern, than the intelligence contained in your last dispatch,[5] that some malicious suggestions have indisposed towards us the mind of our friend and parent Claudius. As you regard your allegiance, use every means to

[3] On the death of Gallienus, see Trebellius Pollio in Hist. August. p. 181 [xxiii. 14]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 37 [40]. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 634 [25]. Eutropius, ix. 11. Aurelius Victor in Epitom. [33]. Victor in Cæsar. [33]. I have compared and blended them all, but have chiefly followed Aurelius Victor, who seems to have had the best memoirs. [Cecropius slew him according to Hist. Aug.; but another story named Heraclian, John of Antioch 152, 3 (Müller, F.H.G. iv.) and Zonaras, xii. 25. Zosimus, i. 40 is probably right in saying that Heraclian instigated the Dalmatian officer to strike the blow. There is a further confusion in John of Antioch, who makes Heraclian the Dalmatian captain.]

[4] Some supposed him, oddly enough, to be a bastard of the younger Gordian. Others took advantage of the province of Dardania, to deduce his origin from Dardanus and the ancient kings of Troy. [M. Aurelius Claudius was his name.]

[5] *Notoria*, a periodical and official dispatch which the emperors received from the *frumentarii* or agents dispersed through the provinces. Of these we may speak hereafter

appease his resentment, but conduct your negotiation with secrecy; let it not reach the knowledge of the Dacian troops; they are already provoked, and it might inflame their fury. I myself have sent him some presents: be it your care that he accept them with pleasure. Above all, let him not suspect that I am made acquainted with his imprudence. The fear of my anger might urge him to desperate counsels."[6] The presents which accompanied this humble epistle, in which the monarch solicited a reconciliation with his discontented subject, consisted of a considerable sum of money, a splendid wardrobe, and a valuable service of silver and gold plate. By such arts Gallienus softened the indignation, and dispelled the fears, of his Illyrian general; and during the remainder of that reign the formidable sword of Claudius was always drawn in the cause of a master whom he despised. At last, indeed, he received from the conspirators the bloody purple of Gallienus: but he had been absent from their camps and counsels; and, however he might applaud the deed, we may candidly presume that he was innocent of the knowledge of it.[7] When Claudius ascended the throne, he was about fifty-four years of age.

Death of Aureolus

The siege of Milan was still continued, and Aureolus soon discovered that the success of his artifices had only raised up a more determined adversary. He attempted to negotiate with Claudius a treaty of alliance and partition. "Tell him," replied the intrepid emperor, "that such proposals should have been made to Gallienus; *he*, perhaps, might have listened to them with patience, and accepted a colleague as despicable as himself."[8] This stern refusal, and a last unsuccessful effort, obliged Aureolus to yield the city and himself to the discretion of the conqueror. The judgment of the army pronounced him worthy of death, and Claudius, after a feeble resistance, consented to the execution of the sentence. Nor was the zeal of the senate less ardent in the cause of their new sovereign. They ratified, perhaps with a sincere transport of zeal, the election of Claudius; and, as his predecessor had shown himself the personal enemy of their order, they exercised, under the name of justice, a severe

[6] Hist. August. p. 208 [xxv. 17]. Gallienus describes the plate, vestments, &c., like a man who loved and understood those splendid trifles.

[7] Julian (Orat. i. p. 6) affirms that Claudius acquired the empire in a just and even holy manner. But we may distrust the partiality of a kinsman.

[8] Hist. August. p. 203 [ib. 5]. There are some trifling differences concerning the circumstances of the last defeat and death of Aureolus. [The inscription in Boeckh (C.I.G. 6761) seems to have no independent value, but to have been composed on the basis of the account of Zosimus. See Schiller, i. 846.]

revenge against his friends and family. The senate was permitted to discharge the ungrateful office of punishment, and the emperor reserved for himself the pleasure and merit of obtaining by his intercession a general act of indemnity.[9]

Clemency and justice of Claudius

Such ostentatious clemency discovers less of the real character of Claudius than a trifling circumstance in which he seems to have consulted only the dictates of his heart. The frequent rebellions of the provinces had involved almost every person in the guilt of treason, almost every estate in the case of confiscation; and Gallienus often displayed his liberality by distributing among his officers the property of his subjects. On the accession of Claudius, an old woman threw herself at his feet, and complained that a general of the late emperor had obtained an arbitrary grant of her patrimony. This general was Claudius himself, who had not entirely escaped the contagion of the times. The emperor blushed at the reproach, but deserved the confidence which she had reposed in his equity. The confession of his fault was accompanied with immediate and ample restitution.[10]

He undertakes the reformation of the army

In the arduous task which Claudius had undertaken, of restoring the empire to its ancient splendour, it was first necessary to revive among his troops a sense of order and obedience. With the authority of a veteran commander, he represented to them that the relaxation of discipline had introduced a long train of disorders, the effects of which were at length experienced by the soldiers themselves; that a people ruined by oppression, and indolent from despair, could no longer supply a numerous army with the means of luxury, or even of subsistence; that the danger of each individual had increased with the despotism of the military order, since princes who tremble on the throne will guard their safety by the instant sacrifice of every obnoxious subject. The emperor expatiated on the mischiefs of a lawless caprice which the soldiers could only gratify at the expense of their own blood, as their seditious elections had so frequently been followed by civil wars, which consumed the flower of the legions either in the field of battle or in the cruel abuse of victory. He painted in the most lively colours the exhausted state of the treasury, the desolation of the provinces, the disgrace of the Roman name, and the insolent triumph of rapacious barbarians. It was against those bar-

[9] Aurelius Victor in Gallien. The people loudly prayed for the damnation of Gallienus. The senate decreed that his relations and servants should be thrown down headlong from the Gemonian stairs. An obnoxious officer of the revenue had his eyes torn out whilst under examination.

[10] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 137 [*leg.* 635; c. 26].

barians, he declared, that he intended to point the first effort of their arms. Tetricus might reign for a while over the West, and even Zenobia might preserve the dominion of the East.[11] These usurpers were his personal adversaries; nor could he think of indulging any private resentment till he had saved an empire, whose impending ruin would, unless it was timely prevented, crush both the army and the people.

A.D. 269. The Goths invade the empire

The various nations of Germany and Sarmatia[12] who fought under the Gothic standard had already collected an armament more formidable than any which had yet issued from the Euxine. On the banks of the Dniester, one of the great rivers that discharge themselves into that sea, they constructed a fleet of two thousand, or even of six thousand vessels;[13] numbers which, however incredible they may seem, would have been insufficient to transport their pretended army of three hundred and twenty thousand barbarians. Whatever might be the real strength of the Goths, the vigour and success of the expedition were not adequate to the greatness of the preparations. In their passage through the Bosphorus, the unskilful pilots were overpowered by the violence of the current; and while the multitude of their ships were crowded in a narrow channel, many were dashed against each other, or against the shore. The barbarians made several descents on the coasts both of Europe and Asia; but the open country was already plundered, and they were repulsed with shame and loss from the fortified cities which they assaulted. A spirit of discouragement and division arose in the fleet, and some of their chiefs sailed away towards the islands of Crete and Cyprus but the main body, pursuing a more steady course, anchored at length near the foot of Mount Athos, and assaulted the city of Thessalonica, the wealthy capital of all the Macedonian provinces Their attacks, in which they displayed a fierce but artless bravery, were soon interrupted by the rapid approach of Claudius, hastening to a scene of action that deserved the presence of a warlike prince at the head of the remaining powers of the empire.

[11] Zonaras on this occasion mentions Posthumus; but the registers of the senate (Hist. August. p. 203 [ib. 4]) prove that Tetricus was already emperor of the western provinces.

[12] [The author does not mention the coalition of Grethungi, Tervingi, Alamanni and other nations, which Claudius had to face in 268. The Alamanni crossed the Brenner and were dejected by Claudius near Lake Garda. Aurelius Victor, epit. 34, 2; Eckhel, vii. 474; C. I. L. iii. 3521.]

[13] The Augustan History mentions the smaller, Zonaras [Zosimus, i. 42] the larger, number; the lively fancy of Montesquieu induced him to prefer the latter. [For these invasions see Hodgkin, i. c. 1.]

Impatient for battle, the Goths immediately broke up their camp, relinquished the siege of Thessalonica, left their navy at the foot of Mount Athos, traversed the hills of Macedonia, and pressed forwards to engage the last defence of Italy.

Distress and firmness of Claudius

We still possess an original letter addressed by Claudius to the senate and people on this memorable occasion. "Conscript fathers," says the emperor, "know that three hundred and twenty thousand Goths have invaded the Roman territory. If I vanquish them, your gratitude will reward my services. Should I fall, remember that I am the successor of Gallienus. The whole republic is fatigued and exhausted. We shall fight after Valerian, after Ingenuus, Regillianus, Lollianus, Posthumus, Celsus, and a thousand others, whom a just contempt for Gallienus provoked into rebellion. We are in want of darts, of spears, and of shields. The strength of the empire, Gaul and Spain, are usurped by Tetricus, and we blush to acknowledge that the archers of the East serve under the banners of Zenobia. Whatever we shall perform will be sufficiently great."[14] The melancholy firmness of this epistle announces a hero careless of his fate, conscious of his danger, but still deriving a well-grounded hope from the resources of his own mind.

His victory over the Goths

The event surpassed his own expectations and those of the world. By the most signal victories he delivered the empire from this host of barbarians, and was distinguished by posterity under the glorious appellation of the Gothic Claudius. The imperfect historians of an irregular war[15] do not enable us to describe the order and circumstances of his exploits; but, if we could be indulged in the illusion, we might distribute into three acts this memorable tragedy. I. The decisive battle was fought near Naissus, a city of Dardania. The legions at first gave way, oppressed by numbers, and dismayed by misfortunes. Their ruin was inevitable, had not the abilities of their emperor prepared a seasonable relief. A large detachment, rising out of the secret and difficult passes of the mountains, which, by his order, they had occupied, suddenly assailed the rear of the victorious Goths. The favourable instant was improved by the activity of Claudius. He revived the courage of his troops, restored their ranks, and pressed the barbarians on every side.

[14] Trebell. Pollio in Hist. August. p. 204 [xxv. 7].

[15] Hist. August. in Claud. Aurelian. et Prob. Zosimus, l. i. p. 38-42 [c. 42]. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 638 [c. 26]. Aurel. Victor in Epitom. Victor Junior in Cæsar. Eutrop. ix. 11. Euseb. in Chron. [The skill with which Claudius planned the campaign is well brought out in the account of Schiller, i. 848.]

Fifty thousand men are reported to have been slain in the battle of Naissus. Several large bodies of barbarians, covering their retreat with a moveable fortification of waggons, retired, or rather escaped, from the field of slaughter. II. We may presume that some insurmountable difficulty, the fatigue, perhaps, or the disobedience, of the conquerors, prevented Claudius from completing in one day the destruction of the Goths. The war was diffused over the provinces of Mæsia, Thrace, and Macedonia, and its operations drawn out into a variety of marches, surprises, and tumultuary engagements, as well by sea as by land. When the Romans suffered any loss, it was commonly occasioned by their own cowardice or rashness; but the superior talents of the emperor, his perfect knowledge of the country, and his judicious choice of measures as well as officers, assured on most occasions the success of his arms. The immense booty, the fruit of so many victories, consisted for the greater part of cattle and slaves. A select body of the Gothic youth was received among the Imperial troops; the remainder was sold into servitude; and so considerable was the number of female captives, that every soldier obtained to his share two or three women. A circumstance from which we may conclude that the invaders entertained some designs of settlement as well as of plunder; since even in a naval expedition they were accompanied by their families. III. The loss of their fleet, which was either taken or sunk, had intercepted the retreat of the Goths. A vast circle of Roman posts, distributed with skill, supported with firmness, and gradually closing towards a common centre, forced the barbarians into the most inaccessible parts of Mount Hæmus, where they found a safe refuge, but a very scanty subsistence. During the course of a rigorous winter, in which they were besieged by the emperor's troops, famine and pestilence, desertion and the sword, continually diminished the imprisoned multitude. On the return of spring, nothing appeared in arms except a hardy and desperate band, the remnant of that mighty host which had embarked at the mouth of the Dniester.

A.D. 270

March. Death of the emperor, who recommends Aurelian for his successor

The pestilence which swept away such numbers of the barbarians at length proved fatal to their conqueror. After a short but glorious reign of two years, Claudius expired at Sirmium, amidst the tears and acclamations of his subjects. In his last illness, he convened the principal officers of the state and army, and in their presence recommended Aurelian,[16] one of his

[16] According to Zonaras (l. xii. p. 636 [ib.]) Claudius, before his death, invested

generals,[17] as the most deserving of the throne, and the best qualified to execute the great design which he himself had been permitted only to undertake. The virtues of Claudius, his valour, affability, justice, and temperance, his love of fame and of his country, place him in that short list of emperors who added lustre to the Roman purple. Those virtues, however, were celebrated with peculiar zeal and complacency by the courtly writers of the age of Constantine, who was the great-grandson of Crispus, the elder brother of Claudius. The voice of flattery was soon taught to repeat that the gods, who so hastily had snatched Claudius from the earth, rewarded his merit and piety by the perpetual establishment of the empire in his family.[18]

The attempt and fall of Quintilius

Notwithstanding these oracles, the greatness of the Flavian family (a name which it had pleased them to assume) was deferred above twenty years, and the elevation of Claudius occasioned the immediate ruin of his brother Quintilius, who possessed not sufficient moderation or courage to descend into the private station to which the patriotism of the late emperor had condemned him. Without delay or reflection, he assumed the purple at Aquileia, where he commanded a considerable force; and, though his reign lasted only seventeen days, he had time to obtain the sanction of the senate, and to experience a mutiny of the troops. As soon as he was informed that the great army of the Danube had invested the well-known valour of Aurelian with Imperial power, he sunk under the fame and merit of his rival; and, ordering his veins to be opened, prudently withdrew himself from the unequal contest.[19]

April

Origin and services of Aurelian

The general design of this work will not permit us minutely to relate the actions of every emperor after he ascended the

him with the purple; but this singular fact is rather contradicted than confirmed by other writers. [Zonaras says that Claudius recommended Aurelian to his officers, and that, *according to some*, he even proclaimed him emperor on the spot.]

[17] [L. Domitius Aurelianus.]

[18] See the life of Claudius by Pollio, and the orations of Mamertinus, Eumenius, and Julian. See likewise the Cæsars of Julian, p. 313. In Julian it was not adulation, but superstition and vanity.

[19] Zosimus, l. i. p. 42 [47]. Pollio (Hist. August. p. 206 [xxv. 12, 5]) allows him virtues, and says that like Pertinax he was killed by licentious soldiers. According to Dexippus [quoted by Pollio, Hist. Aug., but what he said was (not *occisum* but) *mortuum* ἀποθανεῖν *nec tamen addit morbo*, thus leaving it doubtful] he died of a disease. [M. Aurelius Claudius Quintillus (this is the form of his name on coins, and in best MSS. of Hist Aug.; Eckhel, vii. 478). It is to be noted that the Senate favoured his claims. He had been stationed to guard the Julian Alps and Aquileia, to cover the rear of Claudius in his Gothic war. He seems to have gained some victory, Cohen, 52.]

throne, much less to deduce the various fortunes of his private life. We shall only observe, that the father of Aurelian was a peasant of the territory of Sirmium, who occupied a small farm, the property of Aurelius, a rich senator. His warlike son enlisted in the troops as a common soldier, successively rose to the rank of a centurion, a tribune, the præfect of a legion, the inspector of the camp,[20] the general, or, as it was then called, the duke of a frontier; and at length, during the Gothic war, exercised the important office of commander-in-chief of the cavalry. In every station he distinguished himself by matchless valour,[21] rigid discipline, and successful conduct. He was in-
[258 A.D.] vested with the consulship by the emperor Valerian, who styles him, in the pompous language of that age, the deliverer of Illyricum, the restorer of Gaul, and the rival of the Scipios. At the recommendation of Valerian, a senator of the highest rank and merit, Ulpius Crinitus, whose blood was derived from the same source as that of Trajan, adopted the Pannonian peasant, gave him his daughter in marriage, and relieved with his ample fortune the honourable poverty which Aurelian had preserved inviolate.[22]

Aurelian's successful reign

The reign of Aurelian lasted only four years and about nine months; but every instant of that short period was filled by some memorable achievement. He put an end to the Gothic war, chastised the Germans who invaded Italy, recovered Gaul, Spain, and Britain out of the hands of Tetricus, and destroyed the proud monarchy which Zenobia had erected in the East on the ruins of the afflicted empire.

His severe discipline

It was the rigid attention of Aurelian even to the minutest articles of discipline which bestowed such uninterrupted success on his arms. His military regulations are contained in a very

[20] [This seems to be an invention of Vopiscus. Such an office did not exist.]

[21] Theoclius [Cæsareanorum temporum scriptor] (as quoted in the Augustan History, p. 211 [xxvi. 6]) affirms that in one day he killed, with his own hand, forty-eight Sarmatians, and in several subsequent engagements nine hundred and fifty. This heroic valour was admired by the soldiers, and celebrated in their rude songs, the burthen of which was *mille mille mille occidit.*

[22] Acholius (ap. Hist. August. p. 213 [xxvi. 12]) describes the ceremony of the adoption, as it was performed at Byzantium, in the presence of the emperor and his great officers. [Grave doubts are felt as to the truth of these statements which Vopiscus professes to quote from Acholius. (1) Aurelian was consul for the first time in 271, according to the consular Fasti (see Klein, *Fasti consulares*, 110), and therefore cannot have been consul in 258. (2) Had he been adopted by Ulpius Crinitus, he must have assumed the name of his adopted father; but he never did so. (3) Some of the persons present at the ceremony held offices of whose existence before Diocletian's time there is no other trace. See Rothkegel, *Die Regierung des Kaisers Gallienus*, p. 10.]

concise epistle to one of his inferior officers, who is commanded to enforce them, as he wishes to become a tribune, or as he is desirous to live. Gaming, drinking, and the arts of divination were severely prohibited. Aurelian expected that his soldiers should be modest, frugal, and laborious; that their armour should be constantly kept bright, their weapons sharp, their clothing and horses ready for immediate service; that they should live in their quarters with chastity and sobriety, without damaging the corn fields, without stealing even a sheep, a fowl or a bunch of grapes, without exacting from their landlords either salt, or oil, or wood. "The public allowance," continues the emperor, "is sufficient for their support; their wealth should be collected from the spoil of the enemy, not from the tears of the provincials."[23] A single instance will serve to display the rigour, and even cruelty, of Aurelian. One of the soldiers had seduced the wife of his host. The guilty wretch was fastened to two trees forcibly drawn towards each other, and his limbs were torn asunder by their sudden separation. A few such examples impressed a salutary consternation. The punishments of Aurelian were terrible; but he had seldom occasion to punish more than once the same offence. His own conduct gave a sanction to his laws, and the seditious legions dreaded a chief who had learned to obey, and who was worthy to command.

He concludes a treaty with the Goths

The death of Claudius had revived the fainting spirit of the Goths. The troops which guarded the passes of Mount Hæmus, and the banks of the Danube, had been drawn away by the apprehension of a civil war; and it seems probable that the remaining body of the Gothic and Vandalic tribes embraced the favourable opportunity, abandoned their settlements of the Ukraine, traversed the rivers, and swelled with new multitudes the destroying host of their countrymen. Their united numbers were at length encountered by Aurelian, and the bloody and doubtful conflict ended only with the approach of night.[24] Exhausted by so many calamities which they had mutually endured and inflicted during a twenty years' war, the Goths and the Romans consented to a lasting and beneficial treaty. It was earnestly

[23] Hist. August. p. 211 [xxvi. 7]. This laconic epistle is truly the work of a soldier; it abounds with military phrases and words, some of which cannot be understood without difficulty. *Ferramenta samiata* is well explained by Saimasius. The former of the words means all weapons of offence, and is contrasted with *Arma*, defensive armour. The latter signifies keen and well sharpened. [He is called *restitutor exerciti* on coins, Cohen, 175, as well as by the more ambitious title *restitutor orbis*, Cohen, 164 *sqq.*]

[24] Zosim. l. 1, p. 45 [48]

solicited by the barbarians, and cheerfully ratified by the legions, to whose suffrage the prudence of Aurelian referred the decision of that important question. The Gothic nation engaged to supply the armies of Rome with a body of two thousand auxiliaries, consisting entirely of cavalry, and stipulated in return an undisturbed retreat, with a regular market as far as the Danube, provided by the emperor's care, but at their own expense. The treaty was observed with such religious fidelity, that, when a party of five hundred men straggled from the camp in quest of plunder, the king or general of the barbarians commanded that the guilty leader should be apprehended and shot to death with darts, as a victim devoted to the sanctity of their engagements. It is, however, not unlikely that the precaution of Aurelian, who had exacted as hostages the sons and daughters of the Gothic chiefs, contributed something to this pacific temper. The youths he trained in the exercise of arms, and near his own person; to the damsels he gave a liberal and Roman education, and, by bestowing them in marriage on some of his principal officers, gradually introduced between the two nations the closest and most endearing connexions.[25]

and resigns to them the province of Dacia

But the most important condition of peace was understood rather than expressed in the treaty. Aurelian withdrew the Roman forces from Dacia, and tacitly relinquished that great province to the Goths and Vandals.[26] His manly judgment convinced him of the solid advantages, and taught him to despise the seeming disgrace, of thus contracting the frontiers of the monarchy. The Dacian subjects, removed from those distant possessions which they were unable to cultivate or defend, added strength and populousness to the southern side of the Danube. A fertile territory, which the repetition of barbarous inroads had changed into a desert, was yielded to their industry, and a new province of Dacia[27] still preserved the memory of Trajan's conquests. The old country of that name detained, however, a considerable number of its inhabi-

[25] Dexippus (ap. Excerpta Legat. p. 12 [p. 19, ed. Bonn]) relates the whole transaction under the name of Vandals. Aurelian married one of the Gothic ladies to his general Bonosus, who was able to drink with the Goths and discover their secrets. Hist. August. p. 247 [xxix. 14, 15]. [The author is mistaken in applying the account of Dexippus to the Goths: the negotiations were with the Vandals.]

[26] Hist. August. p. 222 [xxvi. 39]. Eutrop. ix. 15. Sextus Rufus, c. 9. Lactantius de mortibus Persecutorum, c. 9. [But see above, chap. x. note 106.]

[27] [*Dacia felix* on coins, Eckhel, vii. 481. Unfortunately this new province, unlike the old, had no strategic importance.]

tants, who dreaded exile more than a Gothic master.[28] These degenerate Romans continued to serve the empire, whose allegiance they had renounced, by introducing among their conquerors the first notions of agriculture, the useful arts, and the conveniences of civilized life. An intercourse of commerce and language was gradually established between the opposite banks of the Danube; and, after Dacia became an independent state, it often proved the firmest barrier of the empire against the invasions of the savages of the North. A sense of interest attached these more settled barbarians to the alliance of Rome, and a permanent interest very frequently ripens into sincere and useful friendship. This various colony, which filled the ancient province and was insensibly blended into one great people, still acknowledged the superior renown and authority of the Gothic tribe, and claimed the fancied honour of a Scandinavian origin. At the same time the lucky though accidental resemblance of the name of Getæ, infused among the credulous Goths a vain persuasion that, in a remote age, their own ancestors, already seated in the Dacian provinces, had received the instructions of Zamolxis, and checked the victorious arms of Sesostris and Darius.[29]

The Alemannic war

While the vigorous and moderate conduct of Aurelian restored the Illyrian frontier, the nation of the Alemanni[30] violated the conditions of peace, which either Gallienus had purchased, or Claudius had imposed, and, inflamed by their impatient youth, suddenly flew to arms. Forty thousand horse appeared in the field,[31] and the numbers of the infantry doubled those of the cavalry.[32] The first objects of their avarice were a few cities of

[28] The Walachians still preserve many traces of the Latin language, and have boasted in every age of their Roman descent. They are surrounded by, but not mixed with, the barbarians. See a Memoir of M. d'Anville, on ancient Dacia, in the Academy of Inscriptions, tom. xxx. [The Roumanian boast as to their descent was challenged about twenty years ago by Roesler, whose book led to a notable controversy, which will claim our attention at a later stage.]

[29] See the first chapter of Jornandes. The Vandals however (c. 22) maintained a short independence between the rivers Marisia and Crissia (Maros and Keres) which fell into the Theiss.

[30] Dexippus, p. 7-12 [fr. 25]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 43 [49]. Vopiscus in Aurelian. in Hist. August. [c. 18]. However these historians differ in names (Alemanni, Juthungi, and Marcomanni) it is evident that they mean the same people, and the same war; but it requires some care to conciliate and explain them. [Aurelius Victor, 35, 2, says Alamanni. But the whole narrative in the text is vitiated by the author's deliberate confusion of the Juthungi, Alamanni and Vandals.]

[31] Cantoclarus, with his usual accuracy, chooses to translate three hundred thousand; his version is equally repugnant to sense and to grammar.

[32] We may remark, as an instance of bad taste, that Dexippus applies to the light infantry of the Alemanni the technical terms proper only to the Grecian Phalanx.

the Rhætian frontier; but, their hopes soon rising with success, the rapid march of the Alemanni traced a line of devastation from the Danube to the Po.[33]

A.D. 270, September

The emperor was almost at the same time informed of the irruption, and of the retreat, of the barbarians. Collecting an active body of troops, he marched with silence and celerity along the skirts of the Hercynian forest; and the Alemanni, laden with the spoils of Italy, arrived at the Danube, without suspecting that, on the opposite bank, and in an advantageous post, a Roman army lay concealed and prepared to intercept their return. Aurelian indulged the fatal security of the barbarians, and permitted about half their forces to pass the river without disturbance and without precaution. Their situation and astonishment gave him an easy victory; his skilful conduct improved the advantage. Disposing the legions in a semicircular form, he advanced the two horns of the crescent across the Danube, and, wheeling them on a sudden towards the centre, inclosed the rear of the German host. The dismayed barbarians, on whatsoever side they cast their eyes, beheld with despair a wasted country, a deep and rapid stream, a victorious and implacable enemy.

Reduced to this distressed condition, the Alemanni no longer disdained to sue for peace.[34] Aurelian received their ambassadors at the head of his camp, and with every circumstance of martial pomp that could display the greatness and discipline of Rome. The legions stood to their arms in well-ordered ranks and awful silence. The principal commanders, distinguished by the ensigns of their rank, appeared on horseback on either side of the Imperial throne. Behind the throne, the consecrated images of the emperor and his predecessors,[35] the golden eagles, and the various titles of the legions, engraved in letters of gold, were exalted in the air on lofty pikes covered with silver. When Aurelian assumed his seat, his manly grace and majestic figure[36] taught the barbarians to revere the person as well as the purple of their conqueror. The ambassadors fell prostrate on the ground in silence. They were commanded to rise, and permitted to

[33] In Dexippus we at present read Rhodanus; M. de Valois very judiciously alters the word to Eridanus. [This narrative of Dexippus refers to the Juthungi, not to the Alamanni.]

[34] [Really the Juthungi, Dexippus, p. 25. A.D. 270. A treaty was also made with the Vandals, ib.]

[35] The emperor Claudius was certainly of the number; but we are ignorant how far this mark of respect was extended; if to Cæsar and Augustus, it must have produced a very awful spectacle; a long line of the masters of the world.

[36] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 210 [xxvi. 6].

speak. By the assistance of interpreters they extenuated their perfidy, magnified their exploits, expatiated on the vicissitudes of fortune and the advantages of peace, and, with an ill-timed confidence, demanded a large subsidy, as the price of the alliance which they offered to the Romans. The answer of the emperor was stern and imperious. He treated their offer with contempt, and their demand with indignation; reproached the barbarians, that they were as ignorant of the arts of war as of the laws of peace; and finally dismissed them with the choice only of submitting to his unconditioned mercy, or awaiting the utmost severity of his resentment.[37] Aurelian had resigned a distant province to the Goths; but it was dangerous to trust or to pardon these perfidious barbarians, whose formidable power kept Italy itself in perpetual alarms.

The Alemanni invade Italy

Immediately after this conference it should seem that some unexpected emergency required the emperor's presence in Pannonia. He devolved on his lieutenants the care of finishing the destruction of the Alemanni, either by the sword, or by the surer operation of famine. But an active despair has often triumphed over the indolent assurance of success. The barbarians, finding it impossible to traverse the Danube and the Roman camp, broke through the posts in their rear, which were more feebly or less carefully guarded; and with incredible diligence, but by a different road, returned towards the mountains of Italy.[38] Aurelian, who considered the war as totally extinguished, received the mortifying intelligence of the escape of the Alemanni, and of the ravage which they already committed in the territory of Milan. The legions were commanded to follow, with as much expedition as those heavy bodies were capable of exerting, the rapid flight of an enemy whose infantry and cavalry moved with almost equal swiftness. A few days afterwards the emperor himself marched to the relief of Italy, at the head of a chosen body of auxiliaries (among whom were the hostages and cavalry of the Vandals), and of all the Prætorian guards who had served in the wars on the Danube.[39]

and are at last vanquished by Aurelian

As the light troops of the Alemanni had spread themselves from the Alps to the Apennine, the incessant vigilance of Aurelian and his officers was exercised in the discovery, the attack,

[37] Dexippus gives them a subtle and prolix oration, worthy of a Grecian Sophist.

[38] Hist. August. p. 215 [xxvi. 18, where the invaders are called Marcomanni. The second invasion of the Juthungi (Dexippus, ib. *ad fin.*) may have been connected with this Alamannic invasion.]

[39] Dexippus, p. 12 [fr. 25 *ad fin.*].

and the pursuit of the numerous detachments. Notwithstanding this desultory war, three considerable battles are mentioned, in which the principal force of both armies was obstinately engaged.[40] The success was various. In the first, fought near Placentia, the Romans received so severe a blow, that, according to the expression of a writer extremely partial to Aurelian, the immediate dissolution of the empire was apprehended.[41] The crafty barbarians, who had lined the woods, suddenly attacked the legions in the dusk of the evening, and, it is most probable, after the fatigue and disorder of a long march. The fury of their charge was irresistible; but at length, after a dreadful slaughter, the patient firmness of the emperor rallied his troops, and restored, in some degree, the honour of his arms. The second battle was fought near Fano in Umbria; on the spot which, five hundred years before, had been fatal to the brother of Hannibal.[42] Thus far the successful Germans had advanced along the Æmilian and Flaminian way, with a design of sacking the defenceless mistress of the world. But Aurelian, who, watchful for the safety of Rome, still hung on their rear, found in this place the decisive moment of giving them a total and irretrievable defeat.[43] The flying remnant of their host was exterminated in a third and last battle near Pavia; and Italy was delivered from the inroads of the Alemanni.

Superstitious ceremonies

Fear has been the original parent of superstition, and every new calamity urges trembling mortals to deprecate the wrath of their invisible enemies. Though the best hope of the republic was in the valour and conduct of Aurelian, yet such was the public consternation, when the barbarians were hourly expected at the gates of Rome, that, by a decree of the senate, the Sibylline books were consulted. Even the emperor himself, from a motive either of religion or of policy, recommended the salutary measure, chided the tardiness of the senate,[44] and offered to supply whatever expense, whatever animals, whatever captives of any nation, the gods should require. Notwithstanding this liberal offer, it does not appear that any human victims expiated with their blood the sins of the Roman

[40] Victor Junior in Aurelian. [Epit. 35].

[41] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 216 [xxvi. 21, 1].

[42] The little river or rather torrent of Metaurus, near Fano, has been immortalized, by finding such an historian as Livy, and such a poet as Horace.

[43] It is recorded by an inscription found at Pezaro. See Gruter. cclxxvi. 3 [Orelli, 1031].

[44] One should imagine, he said, that you were assembled in a Christian church, not in the temple of all the gods.

people. The Sibylline books enjoined ceremonies of a more harmless nature, processions of priests in white robes, attended by a chorus of youths and virgins; lustrations of the city and adjacent country; and sacrifices, whose powerful influence disabled the barbarians from passing the mystic ground on which they had been celebrated. However puerile in themselves, these superstitious arts were subservient to the success of the war; and if, in the decisive battle of Fano, the Alemanni fancied they saw an army of spectres combating on the side of Aurelian, he received a real and effectual aid from this imaginary reinforcement.[45] A.D. 271, Jan. 11

But, whatever confidence might be placed in ideal ramparts, the experience of the past, and the dread of the future, induced the Romans to construct fortifications of a grosser and more substantial kind. The seven hills of Rome had been surrounded by the successors of Romulus with an ancient wall of more than thirteen miles.[46] The vast inclosure may seem disproportioned to the strength and numbers of the infant state. But it was necessary to secure an ample extent of pasture and arable land against the frequent and sudden incursions of the tribes of Latium, the perpetual enemies of the republic. With the progress of Roman greatness, the city and its inhabitants gradually increased, filled up the vacant space, pierced through the useless walls, covered the field of Mars, and, on every side, followed the public highways in long and beautiful suburbs.[47] The extent of the new walls, erected by Aurelian, and finished in the reign of Probus, was magnified by popular estimation to near fifty;[48] but is reduced by accurate measurement to about twenty-one miles.[49] It was a great but a melancholy labour, since Fortifications of Rome

[45] Vopiscus in Hist. Aug. p. 215, 216 [xxvi. 19 and 20] gives a long account of these ceremonies, from the Registers of the senate.

[46] Plin. Hist. Natur. iii. 5. To confirm our idea, we may observe that for a long time Mount Cælius was a grove of oaks, and Mount Viminal was over-run with osiers; that in the fourth century, the Aventine was a vacant and solitary retirement; that, till the time of Augustus, the Esquiline was an unwholesome burying ground; and that the numerous inequalities remarked by the ancients in the Quirinal sufficiently prove that it was not covered with buildings. Of the seven hills, the Capitoline and Palatine only, with the adjacent valleys, were the primitive habitations of the Roman people. But this subject would require a dissertation. [It is now generally admitted that Pliny must have meant the circumference of the city as divided by Augustus into 14 regions.]

[47] Expatiantia tecta multas addidere urbes, is the expression of Pliny.

[48] Hist. August. p. 222 [xxvi. 39, 2]. Both Lipsius and Isaac Vossius have eagerly embraced this measure.

[49] See Nardini, Roma Antica, l. i. c. 8. [Compare Jordan, Topographie der Stadt Rom im Alterthum, i. 340 *sqq.*]

the defence of the capital betrayed the decline of the monarchy. The Romans of a more prosperous age, who trusted to the arms of the legions the safety of the frontier camps,[50] were very far from entertaining a suspicion that it would ever become necessary to fortify the seat of empire against the inroads of the barbarians.[51]

Aurelian suppresses the two usurpers

The victory of Claudius over the Goths, and the success of Aurelian against the Alemanni, had already restored to the arms of Rome their ancient superiority over the barbarous nations of the North. To chastise domestic tyrants, and to reunite the dismembered parts of the empire, was a task reserved for the latter of those warlike emperors. Though he was acknowledged by the senate and people, the frontiers of Italy, Africa, Illyricum, and Thrace, confined the limits of his reign. Gaul, Spain, and Britain, Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor were still possessed by two rebels, who alone, out of so numerous a list, had hitherto escaped the dangers of their situation ; and, to complete the ignominy of Rome, these rival thrones had been usurped by women.

Succession of usurpers in Gaul

A rapid succession of monarchs had arisen and fallen in the provinces of Gaul. The rigid virtues of Posthumus served only to hasten his destruction. After suppressing a competitor, who had assumed the purple at Mentz, he refused to gratify his troops with the plunder of the rebellious city ; and, in the seventh year of his reign, became the victim of their disappointed avarice.[52] The death of Victorinus, his friend and associate, was occasioned by a less worthy cause. The shining accomplishments[53] of that prince were stained by a licentious passion, which he indulged in acts of violence, with too little regard to the laws of society, or even to those of love.[54] He was slain at Cologne, by a con-

[50] Tacit. Hist. iv. 23.

[51] For Aurelian's walls, see Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 216, 222 [xxvi. 21 ; 39]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 43 [49]. Eutropius, ix. 15. Aurel. Victor in Aurelian., Victor Junior in Aurelian., Euseb. Hieronym. et Idatius in Chronic.

[52] His competitor was Lollianus, or Ælianus, if indeed these names mean the same person. See Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 1177. [Lælianus. See Appendix 18.]

[53] The character of this prince by Julius Aterianus (ap. Hist. August. p. 187 [xxiv. 6]) is worth transcribing, as it seems fair and impartial. Victorino qui post Junium Posthumum Gallias [G. post J. P.] rexit neminem existimo [æstimo] præferendum : non in virtute Trajanum ; non Antoninum in clementia ; non in gravitate Nervam ; non in gubernando ærario Vespasianum ; non in censura totius vitæ ac severitate militari Pertinacem vel Severum. Sed omnia hæc libido, et cupiditas voluptatis mulierariæ [mul. vol.] sic perdidit, ut nemo audeat virtutes ejus in literas mittere quem constat omnium judicio meruisse puniri. [The right readings are inserted in brackets.]

[54] He ravished the wife of Attitianus, an *actuary*, or army agent. Hist. August. p. 186 [ib.]. Aurel. Victor in Aurelian.

spiracy of jealous husbands, whose revenge would have appeared more justifiable, had they spared the innocence of his son. After the murder of so many valiant princes, it is somewhat remarkable that a female for a long time controlled the fierce legions of Gaul, and still more singular that she was the mother of the unfortunate Victorinus. The arts and treasures of Victoria enabled her successfully to place Marius and Tetricus on the throne, and to reign with a manly vigour under the name of those dependent emperors. Money of copper, of silver, and of gold, was coined in her name; she assumed the titles of Augusta and Mother of the Camps: her power ended only with her life; but her life was perhaps shortened by the ingratitude of Tetricus.[55]

The reign and defeat of Tetricus

When, at the instigation of his ambitious patroness, Tetricus[56] assumed the ensigns of royalty, he was governor of the peaceful province of Aquitaine, an employment suited to his character and education. He reigned four or five years over Gaul, Spain, and Britain, the slave and sovereign of a licentious army, whom he dreaded and by whom he was despised. The valour and fortune of Aurelian at length opened the prospect of a deliverance. He ventured to disclose his melancholy situation, and conjured the emperor to hasten to the relief of his unhappy rival. Had this secret correspondence reached the ears of the soldiers, it would most probably have cost Tetricus his life; nor could he resign the sceptre of the West without committing an act of treason against himself. He affected the appearances of a civil war, led his forces into the field against Aurelian, posted them in the most disadvantageous manner, betrayed his own counsels to the enemy, and with a few chosen friends deserted in the beginning of the action. The rebel legions, though disordered and dismayed by the unexpected treachery of their chief, defended themselves with a desperate valour, till they were cut in pieces almost to a man, in this bloody and memorable battle, which was fought near Chalons in Champagne.[57]

A.D. 271, summer

[55] Pollio assigns her an article among the thirty tyrants. Hist. Aug. p. 200 [xxvi. 31. As for Marius, see Appendix 18.]

[56] [Gaius Pius (?) Esuvius Tetricus. He made his son his colleague, compare Mommsen, *Staatsrecht*, ii. 1106, and Burdigala (owing to his Aquitanian connexions) his capital.]

[57] Pollio in Hist. August p. 196. Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 220 [xxiv. 24; xxvi. 32]. The two Victors, in the lives of Gallienus and Aurelian. Eutropius, ix. 13. Euseb. in Chron. Of all these writers, only the two last (but with strong probability) place the fall of Tetricus before that of Zenobia. M. de Boze (in the Academy of Inscriptions, tom. xxx.) does not wish, and Tillemont (tom. iii. p. 1189)

The retreat of the irregular auxiliaries, Franks and Batavians,[58] whom the conqueror soon compelled or persuaded to repass the Rhine, restored the general tranquillity, and the power of Aurelian was acknowledged from the wall of Antoninus to the columns of Hercules.

As early as the reign of Claudius, the city of Autun, alone and unassisted, had ventured to declare against the legions of Gaul. After a siege of seven months, they stormed and plundered that unfortunate city, already wasted by famine.[59] Lyons, on the contrary, had resisted with obstinate disaffection the arms of Aurelian. We read of the punishment of Lyons,[60] but there is not any mention of the rewards of Autun. Such, indeed, is the policy of civil war; severely to remember injuries, and to forget the most important services. Revenge is profitable, gratitude is expensive.

A.D. 272. Character of Zenobia

Aurelian had no sooner secured the person and provinces of Tetricus, than he turned his arms against Zenobia, the celebrated queen of Palmyra and the East. Modern Europe has produced several illustrious women who have sustained with glory the weight of empire; nor is our own age destitute of such distinguished characters. But if we except the doubtful achievements of Semiramis, Zenobia is perhaps the only female whose superior genius broke through the servile indolence imposed on her sex by the climate and manners of Asia.[61] She claimed her descent from the Macedonian kings of Egypt, equalled in beauty her ancestor Cleopatra, and far surpassed that princess in chastity[62] and valour. Zenobia was esteemed the most lovely as well as the most heroic of her sex. She was of dark complexion (for in speaking of a lady these trifles become important). Her teeth were of a pearly whiteness, and her large black eyes sparkled with uncommon fire, tempered by the most attractive sweetness. Her voice was strong and harmonious. Her manly understanding

her beauty and learning

does not dare, to follow them. I have been fairer than the one, and bolder than the other. [The sources leave no doubt that Aurelian had to deal with Zenobia and the East before he turned to Tetricus and Gaul. Tillemont's caution was justified.]

[58] Victor Junior in Aurelian. Eumenius mentions *Batavicæ;* some critics, without any reason, would fain alter the word to *Bagaudicæ.*

[59] Eumen. in Vet. Panegyr. iv. 8 [*pro restaur. schol.* ed. Bährens, p. 119].

[60] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 246 [xxix. 13]. Autun was not restored till the reign of Diocletian. See Eumenius de restaurandis scholis. [On Autun (Augustodunum) see the elaborate essay of Mr. Freeman, Historical Essays, 4th series.]

[61] Almost everything that is said of the manners of Odenathus and Zenobia is taken from their lives in the Augustan History, by Trebellius Pollio, see p. 192, 198 [xxiv. 15 and 30].

[62] She never admitted her husband's embraces but for the sake of posterity. If her hopes were baffled, in the ensuing *month* she reiterated the experiment.

was strengthened and adorned by study. She was not ignorant of the Latin tongue, but possessed in equal perfection the Greek, the Syriac, and the Egyptian languages. She had drawn up for her own use an epitome of oriental history, and familiarly compared the beauties of Homer and Plato under the tuition of the sublime Longinus.

This accomplished woman gave her hand to Odenathus, who from a private station raised himself to the dominion of the East. She soon became the friend and companion of a hero. In the intervals of war, Odenathus passionately delighted in the exercise of hunting; he pursued with ardour the wild beasts of the desert, lions, panthers, and bears; and the ardour of Zenobia in that dangerous amusement was not inferior to his own. She had inured her constitution to fatigue, disdained the use of a covered carriage, generally appeared on horseback in a military habit, and sometimes marched several miles on foot at the head of the troops. The success of Odenathus was in a great measure ascribed to her incomparable prudence and fortitude. Their splendid victories over the Great King, whom they twice pursued as far as the gates of Ctesiphon, laid the foundations of their united fame and power. The armies which they commanded, and the provinces which they had saved, acknowledged not any other sovereigns than their invincible chiefs. The senate and people of Rome revered a stranger who had avenged their captive emperor, and even the insensible son of Valerian accepted Odenathus for his legitimate colleague. her valour

After a successful expedition against the Gothic plunderers of Asia, the Palmyrenian prince returned to the city of Emesa in Syria. Invincible in war, he was there cut off by domestic treason, and his favourite amusement of hunting was the cause, or at least the occasion, of his death.[63] His nephew, Mæonius, presumed to dart his javelin before that of his uncle; and, though admonished of his error, repeated the same insolence. As a monarch and as a sportsman, Odenathus was provoked: took away his horse, a mark of ignominy among the barbarians, and chastised the rash youth by a short confinement. The offence was soon forgot, but the punishment was remembered; and Mæonius, with a few daring associates, assassinated his uncle in the midst of a great entertainment. Herod, the son of Odena- She revenges her husband's death A.D. 267

[63] Hist. August. p. 192, 193 [xxiv. 15]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 36 [39]. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 633 [c. 24]. The last is clear and probable, the others confused and inconsistent. The text of Syncellus [i. p. 717, ed. Bonn], if not corrupt, is absolute nonsense.

thus, though not of Zenobia, a young man of a soft and effeminate temper,[64] was killed with his father. But Mæonius obtained only the pleasure of revenge by this bloody deed. He had scarcely time to assume the title of Augustus, before he was sacrificed by Zenobia to the memory of her husband.[65]

and reigns over the East and Egypt

With the assistance of his most faithful friends, she immediately filled the vacant throne, and governed with manly counsels Palmyra, Syria, and the East, above five years. By the death of Odenathus, that authority was at an end which the senate had granted him only as a personal distinction; but his martial widow, disdaining both the senate and Gallienus, obliged one of the Roman generals, who was sent against her, to retreat into Europe, with the loss of his army and his reputation.[66] Instead of the little passions which so frequently perplex a female reign, the steady administration of Zenobia was guided by the most judicious maxims of policy. If it was expedient to pardon, she could calm her resentment; if it was necessary to punish, she could impose silence on the voice of pity. Her strict economy was accused of avarice; yet on every proper occasion she appeared magnificent and liberal. The neighbouring states of Arabia, Armenia, and Persia, dreaded her enmity, and solicited her alliance. To the dominions of Odenathus, which extended from the Euphrates to the frontiers of Bithynia, his widow added the inheritance of her ancestors, the populous and fertile kingdom of Egypt. The emperor Claudius acknowledged her merit, and was content that, while *he* pursued the Gothic war, *she* should assert the dignity of the empire in the East.[67] The conduct, however, of Zenobia was attended with some ambiguity; nor is it unlikely that she had conceived the design of erecting an independent and hostile monarchy. She blended with the popular manners of Roman princes the stately pomp of the courts of Asia, and exacted from her subjects the same adoration that was paid to the successors of Cyrus. She bestowed on her three sons[68] a Latin education, and often showed them to the

[64] Odenathus and Zenobia often sent him, from the spoils of the enemy, presents of gems and toys, which he received with infinite delight.

[65] Some very unjust suspicions have been cast on Zenobia, as if she was accessory to her husband's death.

[66] Hist. August. p. 180, 181 [xxiii. 13. See Appendix 19.]

[67] See in Hist. August. p. 198 [xxiv. 30] Aurelian's testimony to her merit; and for the conquest of Egypt, Zosimus, l. i. p. 39, 40 [44].

[68] Timolaus, Herennianus, and Vaballathus. It is supposed that the two former were already dead before the war. On the last, Aurelian bestowed a small province of Armenia, with the title of king; several of his medals are still extant. See Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 1190. [See Appendix 19.]

troops adorned with the Imperial purple. For herself she reserved the diadem, with the splendid but doubtful title of Queen of the East.

The Expedition of Aurelian, A.D. 272 [spring]

When Aurelian passed over into Asia, against an adversary whose sex alone could render her an object of contempt, his presence restored obedience to the province of Bithynia, already shaken by the arms and intrigues of Zenobia.[69] Advancing at the head of his legions, he accepted the submission of Ancyra, and was admitted into Tyana, after an obstinate siege, by the help of a perfidious citizen. The generous though fierce temper of Aurelian abandoned the traitor to the rage of the soldiers: a superstitious reverence induced him to treat with lenity the countrymen of Apollonius the philosopher.[70] Antioch was deserted on his approach, till the emperor, by his salutary edicts, recalled the fugitives, and granted a general pardon to all who, from necessity rather than choice, had been engaged in the service of the Palmyrenian queen. The unexpected mildness of such a conduct reconciled the minds of the Syrians, and, as far as the gates of Emesa, the wishes of the people seconded the terror of his arms.[71]

The emperor defeats the Palmyrenians in the battles of Antioch and Emesa

Zenobia would have ill deserved her reputation, had she indolently permitted the emperor of the West to approach within a hundred miles of her capital. The fate of the East was decided in two great battles; so similar in almost every circumstance that we can scarcely distinguish them from each other, except by observing that the first was fought near Antioch,[72] and the second near Emesa.[73] In both, the queen of Palmyra animated the armies by her presence, and devolved the execution of her orders on Zabdas, who had already signalized his military talents by the conquest of Egypt. The numerous forces of Zenobia consisted for the most part of light archers, and of heavy cavalry clothed in complete steel. The Moorish and Illyrian horse of Aurelian were unable to sustain the ponderous charge of their antagonists. They fled in real or affected dis-

[69] Zosimus, l. i. p. 44 [50].

[70] Vopiscus (in Hist. August. p. 217[xxvi. 23, 24]) gives us an authentic letter, and a doubtful vision, of Aurelian. Apollonius of Tyana was born about the same time as Jesus Christ. His life (that of the former) is related in so fabulous a manner by his disciples, that we are at a loss to discover whether he was a sage, an impostor, or a fanatic.

[71] Zosimus, l. i. p. 46 [52].

[72] At a place called Immæ. Eutropius, Sextus Rufus, and Jerome, mention only this first battle.

[73] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 217 [xxvi. 25] mentions only the second.

order, engaged the Palmyrenians in a laborious pursuit, harassed them by a desultory combat, and at length discomfited this impenetrable but unwieldy body of cavalry. The light infantry, in the meantime, when they had exhausted their quivers, remaining without protection against a closer onset, exposed their naked sides to the swords of the legions. Aurelian had chosen these veteran troops, who were usually stationed on the Upper Danube, and whose valour had been severely tried in the Alemannic war.[74] After the defeat of Emesa, Zenobia found it impossible to collect a third army. As far as the frontier of Egypt, the nations subject to her empire had joined the standard of the conqueror, who detached Probus, the bravest of his generals, to possess himself of the Egyptian provinces. Palmyra was the last resource of the widow of Odenathus. She retired within the walls of her capital, made every preparation for a vigorous resistance, and declared, with the intrepidity of a heroine, that the last moment of her reign and of her life should be the same.

The state of Palmyra

Amid the barren deserts of Arabia, a few cultivated spots rise like islands out of the sandy ocean. Even the name of Tadmor, or Palmyra, by its signification in the Syriac as well as in the Latin language, denoted the multitude of palm trees which afforded shade and verdure to that temperate region. The air was pure, and the soil, watered by some invaluable springs, was capable of producing fruits as well as corn. A place possessed of such singular advantages, and situated at a convenient distance,[75] between the Gulf of Persia and the Mediterranean, was soon frequented by the caravans which conveyed to the nations of Europe a considerable part of the rich commodities of India. Palmyra insensibly increased into an opulent and independent city, and, connecting the Roman and the Parthian monarchies by the mutual benefits of commerce, was suffered to observe an humble neutrality, till at length, after the victories of Trajan, the little republic sunk into the bosom of Rome, and flourished more than one hundred and fifty years in the subordinate though honourable rank of a colony. It was during that peaceful period, if we may judge from a few remaining inscriptions, that the wealthy Palmyrenians constructed those temples,

[74] Zosimus, l. i. p. 44-48 [50-53]. His account of the two battles is clear and circumstantial.

[75] It was five hundred and thirty-seven miles from Seleucia, and two hundred and three from the nearest coast of Syria, according to the reckoning of Pliny, who in a few words (Hist. Natur. v. 21) gives an excellent description of Palmyra.

palaces, and porticos of Grecian architecture, whose ruins, scattered over an extent of several miles, have deserved the curiosity of our travellers. The elevation of Odenathus and Zenobia appeared to reflect new splendour on their country, and Palmyra for a while stood forth the rival of Rome: but the competition was fatal, and ages of prosperity were sacrificed to a moment of glory.[76]

It is besieged by Aurelian

In his march over the sandy desert, between Emesa and Palmyra, the Emperor Aurelian was perpetually harassed by the Arabs; nor could he always defend his army, and especially his baggage, from these flying troops of active and daring robbers, who watched the moment of surprise, and eluded the slow pursuit of the legions. The siege of Palmyra was an object far more difficult and important, and the emperor, who with incessant vigour pressed the attacks in person, was himself wounded with a dart. "The Roman people," says Aurelian, in an original letter, "speak with contempt of the war which I am waging against a woman. They are ignorant both of the character and of the power of Zenobia. It is impossible to enumerate her warlike preparations, of stones, of arrows, and of every species of missile weapons. Every part of the walls is provided with two or three *balistæ*, and artificial fires are thrown from her military engines. The fear of punishment has armed her with a desperate courage. Yet still I trust in the protecting deities of Rome, who have hitherto been favourable to all my undertakings."[77] Doubtful, however, of the protection of the gods, and of the event of the siege, Aurelian judged it more prudent to offer terms of an advantageous capitulation: to the queen, a splendid retreat; to the citizens, their ancient privileges. His proposals were obstinately rejected, and the refusal was accompanied with insult.

who becomes master of Zenobia and of the city

The firmness of Zenobia was supported by the hope that in a very short time famine would compel the Roman army to repass the desert; and by the reasonable expectation that the kings of the East, and particularly the Persian monarch, would arm in the defence of their most natural ally. But fortune and the perseverance of Aurelian overcame every obstacle. The death

[76] Some English travellers from Aleppo *discovered* the ruins of Palmyra, about the end of the last century. Our curiosity has since been gratified in a more splendid manner by Messieurs Wood and Dawkins. For the history of Palmyra, we may consult the masterly dissertation of Dr. Halley in the Philosophical Transactions; Lowthorp's Abridgment, vol. iii. p. 518.

[77] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 218 [xxvi. 26].

of Sapor, which happened about this time,[78] distracted the councils of Persia, and the inconsiderable succours that attempted to relieve Palmyra, were easily intercepted either by the arms or the liberality of the emperor. From every part of Syria, a regular succession of convoys safely arrived in the camp, which was increased by the return of Probus with his victorious troops from the conquest of Egypt. It was then that Zenobia resolved to fly. She mounted the fleetest of her dromedaries,[79] and had already reached the banks of the Euphrates, about sixty miles from Palmyra, when she was overtaken by the pursuit of Aurelian's light horse, seized, and brought back a captive to the feet of the emperor. Her capital soon afterwards surrendered, and was treated with unexpected lenity. The arms, horses, and camels, with an immense treasure of gold, silver, silk, and precious stones, were all delivered to the conqueror, who, leaving only a garrison of six hundred archers, returned to Emesa, and employed some time in the distribution of rewards and punishments at the end of so memorable a war, which restored to the obedience of Rome those provinces that had renounced their allegiance since the captivity of Valerian.

A.D. 273 [spring]

Behaviour of Zenobia

When the Syrian queen was brought into the presence of Aurelian, he sternly asked her, How she had presumed to rise in arms against the emperors of Rome? The answer of Zenobia was a prudent mixture of respect and firmness. "Because I disdained to consider as Roman emperors an Aureolus or a Gallienus. You alone I acknowledge as my conqueror and my sovereign."[80] But, as female fortitude is commonly artificial, so it is seldom steady or consistent. The courage of Zenobia deserted her in the hour of trial; she trembled at the angry clamours of the soldiers, who called aloud for her immediate execution, forgot the generous despair of Cleopatra, which she had proposed as her model, and ignominiously purchased life by the sacrifice of her fame and her friends. It was to their counsels, which governed the weakness of her sex, that she imputed the guilt of her obstinate resistance; it was on their heads that she

[78] From a very doubtful chronology I have endeavoured to extract the most probable date. [The death of Sapor (Shâhpûr I.) is variously placed in 269 and 272; his son was involved in a war with a pretender.]

[79] Hist. August. p. 218 [xxvi. 28]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 50 [55]. Though the camel is a heavy beast of burden, the dromedary, who is either of the same or of a kindred species, is used by the natives of Asia and Africa, on all occasions which require celerity. The Arabs affirm that he will run over as much ground in one day as their fleetest horses can perform in eight or ten. See Buffon, Hist. Naturelle, tom. xi. p. 222, and Shaw's Travels, p. 167.

[80] Pollio in Hist. August. p. 199 [xxiv. 30, 23].

directed the vengeance of the cruel Aurelian. The fame of Longinus, who was included among the numerous and perhaps innocent victims of her fear, will survive that of the queen who betrayed, or the tyrant who condemned, him. Genius and learning were incapable of moving a fierce unlettered soldier, but they had served to elevate and harmonize the soul of Longinus. Without uttering a complaint, he calmly followed the executioner, pitying his unhappy mistress, and bestowing comfort on his afflicted friends.[81]

Rebellion and ruin of Palmyra

Returning from the conquest of the East, Aurelian had already crossed the Streights which divide Europe from Asia, when he was provoked by the intelligence that the Palmyrenians had massacred the governor and garrison which he had left among them, and again erected the standard of revolt. Without a moment's deliberation, he once more turned his face towards Syria. Antioch was alarmed by his rapid approach, and the helpless city of Palmyra felt the irresistible weight of his resentment. We have a letter of Aurelian himself, in which he acknowledges[82] that old men, women, children, and peasants had been involved in that dreadful execution, which should have been confined to armed rebellion; and, although his principal concern seems directed to the re-establishment of a temple of the Sun, he discovers some pity for the remnant of the Palmyrenians, to whom he grants the permission of rebuilding and inhabiting their city. But it is easier to destroy than to restore. The seat of commerce, of arts, and of Zenobia, gradually sunk into an obscure town, a trifling fortress, and at length a miserable village. The present citizens of Palmyra, consisting of thirty or forty families, have erected their mud cottages within the spacious court of a magnificent temple.

Aurelian suppresses the rebellion of Firmus in Egypt

Another and a last labour still awaited the indefatigable Aurelian; to suppress a dangerous though obscure rebel, who, during the revolt of Palmyra, had arisen on the banks of the Nile. Firmus, the friend and ally, as he proudly styled himself, of Odenathus and Zenobia, was no more than a wealthy merchant of Egypt. In the course of his trade to India, he had formed very intimate connexions with the Saracens and the Blemmyes, whose situation on either coast of the Red Sea gave them an easy introduction into the Upper Egypt. The Egyptians he inflamed with the hope of freedom, and, at the head of their

[81] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 219 [xxvi. 30]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 51 [56].
[82] Hist. August. p. 219 [xxvi. 31].

furious multitude, broke into the city of Alexandria, where he assumed the Imperial purple, coined money, published edicts, and raised an army, which, as he vainly boasted, he was capable of maintaining from the sole profits of his paper trade. Such troops were a feeble defence against the approach of Aurelian; and it seems almost unnecessary to relate that Firmus was routed, taken, tortured, and put to death. Aurelian might now congratulate the senate, the people, and himself, that in little more than three years he had restored universal peace and order to the Roman world.[83]

A.D. 274. Triumph of Aurelian

Since the foundation of Rome, no general had more nobly deserved a triumph than Aurelian; nor was a triumph ever celebrated with superior pride and magnificence.[84] The pomp was opened by twenty elephants, four royal tigers, and above two hundred of the most curious animals from every climate of the North, the East, and the South. They were followed by sixteen hundred gladiators, devoted to the cruel amusement of the amphitheatre. The wealth of Asia, the arms and ensigns of so many conquered nations, and the magnificent plate and wardrobe of the Syrian queen, were disposed in exact symmetry or artful disorder. The ambassadors of the most remote parts of the earth, of Æthiopia, Arabia, Persia, Bactriana, India, and China, all remarkable by their rich or singular dresses, displayed the fame and power of the Roman emperor, who exposed likewise to the public view the presents that he had received, and particularly a great number of crowns of gold, the offerings of grateful cities. The victories of Aurelian were attested by the long train of captives who reluctantly attended his triumph, Goths, Vandals, Sarmatians, Alemanni, Franks, Gauls, Syrians and Egyptians. Each people was distinguished by its peculiar inscription, and the title of Amazons was bestowed on ten martial heroines of the Gothic nation who had been taken in arms.[85] But every eye, disregarding the crowd of captives, was fixed on the emperor Tetricus and the queen of the East. The

[83] See Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 220, 242 [xxvi. 32, xxix. 5]. As an instance of luxury, it is observed that he had glass windows. He was remarkable for his strength and appetite, his courage and dexterity. From the letter of Aurelian we may justly infer that Firmus was the last of the rebels, and consequently that Tetricus was already suppressed.

[84] See the triumph of Aurelian, described by Vopiscus. He relates the particulars with his usual minuteness; and on this occasion they *happen* to be interesting. Hist. August. 220 [xxvi. 33].

[85] Among barbarous nations, women have often combated by the side of their husbands. But it is *almost* impossible that a society of Amazons should ever have existed either in the old or new world.

former, as well as his son, whom he had created Augustus, was dressed in Gallic trowsers,[86] a saffron tunic, and a robe of purple. The beauteous figure of Zenobia was confined by fetters of gold; a slave supported the gold chain which encircled her neck, and she almost fainted under the intolerable weight of jewels. She preceded on foot the magnificent chariot in which she once hoped to enter the gates of Rome. It was followed by two other chariots, still more sumptuous, of Odenathus and of the Persian monarch. The triumphal car of Aurelian (it had formerly been used by a Gothic king) was drawn, on this memorable occasion, either by four stags or by four elephants.[87] The most illustrious of the senate, the people, and the army, closed the solemn procession. Unfeigned joy, wonder and gratitude swelled the acclamations of the multitude; but the satisfaction of the senate was clouded by the appearance of Tetricus; nor could they suppress a rising murmur that the haughty emperor should thus expose to public ignominy the person of a Roman and a magistrate.[88]

His treatment of Tetricus and Zenobia

But however, in the treatment of his unfortunate rivals, Aurelian might indulge his pride, he behaved towards them with a generous clemency which was seldom exercised by the ancient conquerors. Princes who, without success, had defended their throne or freedom were frequently strangled in prison, as soon as the triumphal pomp ascended the capitol. These usurpers, whom their defeat had convicted of the crime of treason, were permitted to spend their lives in affluence and honourable repose. The emperor presented Zenobia with an elegant villa at Tibur, or Tivoli, about twenty miles from the capital; the Syrian queen insensibly sank into a Roman matron, her daughters married into noble families, and her race was not yet extinct in the fifth

[86] The use of *Braccæ*, breeches, or trowsers, was still considered in Italy as a Gallic and Barbarian fashion. The Romans, however, had made great advances towards it. To encircle the legs and thighs with *fasciæ*, or bands, was understood in the time of Pompey and Horace to be a proof of ill-health or effeminacy. In the age of Trajan, the custom was confined to the rich and luxurious. It gradually was adopted by the meanest of the people. See a very curious note of Casaubon, ad Sueton. in August. c. 82.

[87] Most probably the former: the latter, seen on the medals of Aurelian, only denote (according to the learned Cardinal Norris [Noris]) an oriental victory.

[88] The expression of Calphurnius (Eclog. i. 50), Nullos ducet *captiva* triumphos, as applied to Rome, contains a very manifest allusion and censure. [Gibbon supposed Calpurnius to have been a contemporary of Carus. It is now established that Calpurnius wrote under Nero, and that the games which he describes were celebrated by that prince. Some of the idylls however which were ascribed to Calpurnius were really written (as Haupt has proved) by Nemesianus, the author of the *Cynegetica*, who lived in the time of Carus.]

century.[89] Tetricus and his son were reinstated in their rank and fortunes. They erected on the Cælian Hill a magnificent palace, and, as soon as it was finished, invited Aurelian to supper. On his entrance, he was agreeably surprised with a picture which represented their singular history. They were delineated offering to the emperor a civic crown and the sceptre of Gaul, and again receiving at his hands the ornaments of the senatorial dignity. The father was afterwards invested with the government of Lucania,[90] and Aurelian, who soon admitted the abdicated monarch to his friendship and conversation, familiarly asked him, Whether it were not more desirable to administer a province of Italy, than to reign beyond the Alps? The son long continued a respectable member of the senate; nor was there any one of the Roman nobility more esteemed by Aurelian, as well as by his successors.[91]

His magnificence and devotion

So long and so various was the pomp of Aurelian's triumph that, although it opened with the dawn of day, the slow majesty of the procession ascended not the Capitol before the ninth hour; and it was already dark when the emperor returned to the palace. The festival was protracted by theatrical representations, the games of the circus, the hunting of wild beasts, combats of gladiators, and naval engagements. Liberal donatives were distributed to the army and people, and several institutions, agreeable or beneficial to the city, contributed to perpetuate the glory of Aurelian. A considerable portion of his oriental spoils was consecrated to the gods of Rome; the Capitol, and every other temple, glittered with the offerings of his ostentatious piety; and the temple of the Sun alone received above fifteen thousand pounds of gold.[92] This last was a magnificent structure, erected by the emperor on the side of the Quirinal hill, and dedicated, soon after the triumph, to that deity whom Aurelian adored as the parent of his life and fortunes. His mother had been an inferior priestess in a chapel of the Sun; a peculiar devotion to the god of Light was a sentiment

[89] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 199 [xxiv. 29]. Hieronym. in Chron. Prosper in Chron. Baronius supposes that Zenobius, bishop of Florence in the time of St. Ambrose, was of her family.

[90] Vopisc. in Hist. August. p. 222 [xxvi. 39, 1]. Eutropius, ix. 13. Victor Jun or. But Pollio in Hist. August. p. 196, says that Tetricus [xxiv. 24] was made corrector of all Italy. [See Appendix 20.]

[91] Hist. August. p. 197 [xxiv. 25].

[92] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 222 [xxvi. 39]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 56 [61]. He placed in it the images of Belus and of the Sun, which he had brought from Palmyra. It was dedicated in the fourth year of his reign (Euseb. in Chron.), but was most assuredly begun immediately on his accession.

which the fortunate peasant imbibed in his infancy; and every step of his elevation, every victory of his reign, fortified superstition by gratitude.[93]

He suppresses a sedition at Rome

The arms of Aurelian had vanquished the foreign and domestic foes of the republic. We are assured that, by his salutary rigour, crimes and factions, mischievous arts and pernicious connivance, the luxuriant growth of a feeble and oppressive government, were eradicated throughout the Roman world.[94] But, if we attentively reflect how much swifter is the progress of corruption than its cure, and if we remember that the years abandoned to public disorders exceeded the months allotted to the martial reign of Aurelian, we must confess that a few short intervals of peace were insufficient for the arduous work of reformation. Even his attempt to restore the integrity of the coin was opposed by a formidable insurrection. The emperor's vexation breaks out in one of his private letters: "Surely," says he, "the gods have decreed that my life should be a perpetual warfare. A sedition within the walls has just now given birth to a very serious civil war. The workmen of the mint, at the instigation of Felicissimus, a slave to whom I had intrusted an employment in the finances, have risen in rebellion. They are at length suppressed; but seven thousand of my soldiers have been slain in the contest, of those troops whose ordinary station is in Dacia, and the camps along the Danube." [95] Other writers, who confirm the same fact, add likewise that it happened soon after Aurelian's triumph; that the decisive engagement was fought on the Cælian Hill; that the workmen of the mint had adulterated the coin; and that the emperor restored the public credit by delivering out good money in exchange for the bad which the people was commanded to bring into the treasury.[96]

Observations upon it

We might content ourselves with relating this extraordinary transaction, but we cannot dissemble how much, in its present form, it appears to us inconsistent and incredible. The debasement of the coin is, indeed, well suited to the administration of Gallienus; nor is it unlikely that the instruments of the cor-

[93] See in the Augustan History, p. 210 [xxvi. 4], the omens of his fortune. His devotion to the sun appears in his letters, on his medals, and is mentioned in the Cæsars of Julian. Commentaire de Spanheim, p. 107 [108, 109].

[94] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 221 [xxvi. 37].

[95] Hist. August. p. 222 [xxvi. 38]. Aurelian calls those soldiers *Hiberi* [in best MSS. the name is corrupt—*Iembariorum*], *Riparienses*, *Castriani*, and *Dacisci*.

[96] Zosimus, l. i. p. 56 [61]. Eutropius, ix. 14. Aurel. Victor.

ruption might dread the inflexible justice of Aurelian. But the guilt, as well as the profit, must have been confined to a few; nor is it easy to conceive by what arts they could arm a people whom they had injured against a monarch whom they had betrayed. We might naturally expect that such miscreants should have shared the public detestation with the informers and the other ministers of oppression; and that the reformation of the coin should have been an action equally popular with the destruction of those obsolete accounts which, by the emperor's order, were burnt in the forum of Trajan.[97] In an age when the principles of commerce were so imperfectly understood, the most desirable end might perhaps be affected by harsh and injudicious means; but a temporary grievance of such a nature can scarcely excite and support a serious civil war. The repetition and intolerable taxes, imposed either on the land or on the necessaries of life, may at last provoke those who will not, or who cannot, relinquish their country. But the case is far otherwise in every operation which, by whatsoever expedients, restores the just value of money. The transient evil is soon obliterated by the permanent benefit, the loss is divided among multitudes; and, if a few wealthy individuals experience a sensible diminution of treasure, with their riches they at the same time lose the degree of weight and importance which they derived from the possession of them. However Aurelian might choose to disguise the real cause of the insurrection, his reformation of the coin could furnish only a faint pretence to a party already powerful and discontented. Rome, though deprived of freedom, was distracted by faction. The people, towards whom the emperor, himself a plebeian, always expressed a peculiar fondness, lived in perpetual dissension with the senate, the equestrian order, and the Prætorian guards.[98] Nothing less than the firm though secret conspiracy of those orders, of the authority of the first, the wealth of the second, and the arms of the third, could have displayed a strength capable of contending in battle with the veteran legions of the Danube, which, under the conduct of a martial sovereign, had achieved the conquest of the West and of the East.

Cruelty of Aurelian

Whatever was the cause or the object of this rebellion, imputed

[97] Hist. August. p. 222 [xxvi. 38]. Aurel. Victor. [Aurelian's monetary reform does not seem to have passed much beyond the stage of excellent intentions.]

[98] It already raged before Aurelian's return from Egypt. See Vopiscus who quotes an original letter. Hist. August. p. 244 [xxix. 5].

with so little probability to the workmen of the mint, Aurelian used his victory with unrelenting rigour.[99] He was naturally of a severe disposition. A peasant and a soldier, his nerves yielded not easily to the impressions of sympathy, and he could sustain without emotion the sight of tortures and death. Trained from his earliest youth in the exercise of arms, he set too small a value on the life of a citizen, chastised by military execution the slightest offences, and transferred the stern discipline of the camp into the civil administration of the laws. His love of justice often became a blind and furious passion; and, whenever he deemed his own or the public safety endangered, he disregarded the rules of evidence, and the proportion of punishments. The unprovoked rebellion with which the Romans rewarded his services exasperated his haughty spirit. The noblest families of the capital were involved in the guilt or suspicion of this dark conspiracy. A hasty spirit of revenge urged the bloody prosecution, and it proved fatal to one of the nephews of the emperor. The executioners (if we may use the expression of a contemporary poet) were fatigued, the prisons were crowded, and the unhappy senate lamented the death or absence of its most illustrious members.[100] Nor was the pride of Aurelian less offensive to that assembly than his cruelty. Ignorant or impatient of the restraints of civil institutions, he disdained to hold his power by any other title than that of the sword, and governed by right of conquest an empire which he had saved and subdued.[101]

He marches into the East, and is assassinated

It was observed by one of the most sagacious of the Roman princes that the talents of his predecessor Aurelian were better suited to the command of an army than to the government of an empire.[102] Conscious of the character in which nature and experience had enabled him to excel, he again took the field a few months after his triumph. It was expedient to exercise the restless temper of the legions in some foreign war, and the Persian monarch, exulting in the shame of Valerian, still braved with impunity the offended majesty of Rome. At the head of

A.D. 274, October

[99] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 222 [xxvi. 38]. The two Victors. Eutropius, ix. 14. Zosimus (l. i. p. 43) mentions only three senators, and places their death before the eastern war.

[100] Nulla catenati feralis pompa senatûs
Carnificum lassabit opus; nec carcere pleno
Infelix raros numerabit curia Patres.—Calphurn. Eclog. i. 60.
[See above, note 88.]

[101] According to the younger Victor, he sometimes wore the diadem [Epit. 35]. *Deus* and *Dominus* appear on his medals.

[102] It was the observation of Diocletian. See Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 224 [xxvi. 44].

an army, less formidable by its numbers than by its discipline and valour, the emperor advanced as far as the Streights which divide Europe from Asia. He there experienced that the most absolute power is a weak defence against the effects of despair. He had threatened one of his secretaries who was accused of extortion; and it was known that he seldom threatened in vain. The last hope which remained for the criminal was to involve some of the principal officers of the army in his danger, or at least in his fears. Artfully counterfeiting his master's hand, he showed them, in a long and bloody list, their own names devoted to death. Without suspecting or examining the fraud, they resolved to secure their lives by the murder of the emperor. On his march, between Byzantium and Heraclea, Aurelian was suddenly attacked by the conspirators, whose stations gave them a right to surround his person; and, after a short resistance, fell by the hand of Mucapor, a general whom he had always loved and trusted. He died regretted by the army, detested by the senate, but universally acknowledged as a warlike and fortunate prince, the useful though severe reformer of a degenerate state.[103]

A.D. 275, January

[103] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 221 [xxvi. 35]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 57 [62]. Eutrop. ix. 15. The two Victors. [Lactantius, de mort. pers. 6, John of Antioch, fr. 156 (F. H. G. iv.). The date of Aurelian's murder is uncertain, but Gibbon puts it at least eight months too early. Alexandrian coins prove that he was alive on, or shortly before (the coins, as Herzog suggests, might have been struck in advance and circulated notwithstanding the emperor's death) 29th August, 275. Herzog (who deals with the problem in his Gesch. und System der röm. Staatsverf. ii. p. 585) accepts the date 25th Sept. (Hist. Aug. xxvii. 3) for the election of Tacitus by the senate, rejecting (1) the date Feb. 3 (xxvi. 41, 3), and (2) the statements as to an interregnum of six or eight months; and (3) condemning the evidence of an inscription on an Orleans milestone (in Henzen's collection 5551) which would place Aurelian's death at the end of 275. This is confirmed by the statement that he reigned about five and a half years (cp. Hist. Aug. xxvi. 37, 4, as amended by Giambelli, after Eutropius, ix. 15); he did not become emperor before spring 270. See next chapter, note 2. Cp. Schiller, i. 871-2.]

CHAPTER XII

Conduct of the Army and Senate after the Death of Aurelian—Reigns of Tacitus, Probus, Carus and his Sons

Extraordinary contest between the army and the senate for the choice of an emperor

Such was the unhappy condition of the Roman emperors, that, whatever might be their conduct, their fate was commonly the same. A life of pleasure or virtue, of severity or mildness, of indolence or glory, alike led to an untimely grave; and almost every reign is closed by the same disgusting repetition of treason and murder. The death of Aurelian, however, is remarkable by its extraordinary consequences. The legions admired, lamented, and revenged their victorious chief. The artifice of his perfidious secretary was discovered and punished. The deluded conspirators attended the funeral of their injured sovereign, with sincere or well-feigned contrition, and submitted to the unanimous resolution of the military order, which was signified by the following epistle. "The brave and fortunate armies to the senate and people of Rome. The crime of one man, and the error of many, have deprived us of the late emperor Aurelian. May it please you, venerable lords and fathers! to place him in the number of the gods, and to appoint a successor whom your judgment shall declare worthy of the Imperial purple. None of those whose guilt or misfortune have contributed to our loss shall ever reign over us."[1] The Roman senators heard, without surprise, that another emperor had been assassinated in his camp; they secretly rejoiced in the fall of Aurelian; but the modest and dutiful address of the legions, when it was communicated in full assembly by the consul, diffused the most pleasing astonishment. Such honours as fear and perhaps esteem could extort they liberally poured forth on the memory of their deceased sovereign. Such acknowledgments as gratitude could inspire they returned to the faithful armies of the republic, who entertained so just a sense of the legal authority of the senate in the choice of an emperor. Yet, notwithstanding this flattering

[1] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 222 [xxvi. 40]. Aurelius Victor mentions a formal deputation from the troops to the senate.

appeal, the most prudent of the assembly declined exposing their safety and dignity to the caprice of an armed multitude. The strength of the legions was, indeed, a pledge of their sincerity, since those who may command are seldom reduced to the necessity of dissembling; but could it naturally be expected, that a hasty repentance would correct the inveterate habits of fourscore years? Should the soldiers relapse into their accustomed seditions, their insolence might disgrace the majesty of the senate, and prove fatal to the object of its choice. Motives like these dictated a decree by which the election of a new emperor was referred to the suffrage of the military order.

A.D. 275, Feb. 3. A peaceful interregnum of eight months

The contention that ensued is one of the best attested, but most improbable, events in the history of mankind.[2] The troops, as if satiated with the exercise of power, again conjured the senate to invest one of its own body with the Imperial purple. The senate still persisted in its refusal; the army in its request. The reciprocal offer was pressed and rejected at least three times, and, whilst the obstinate modesty of either party was resolved to receive a master from the hands of the other, eight months insensibly elapsed; an amazing period of tranquil anarchy, during which the Roman world remained without a sovereign, without an usurper, and without a sedition. The generals and magistrates appointed by Aurelian continued to execute their ordinary functions; and it is observed that a proconsul of Asia was the only considerable person removed from his office in the whole course of the interregnum.

An event somewhat similar, but much less authentic, is supposed to have happened after the death of Romulus, who, in his life and character, bore some affinity with Aurelian. The throne was vacant during twelve months till the election of a Sabine philosopher, and the public peace was guarded in the same manner by the union of the several orders of the state. But, in the time of Numa and Romulus, the arms of the people were controlled by the authority of the Patricians; and the balance of freedom was easily preserved in a small and virtuous community.[3] The

[2] Vopiscus, our principal authority, wrote at Rome sixteen years only after the death of Aurelian; and, besides the recent notoriety of the facts, constantly draws his materials from the Journals of the Senate, and the original papers of the Ulpian library. [See Appendix I.] Zosimus and Zonaras appear as ignorant of this transaction as they were in general of the Roman constitution. [The interregnum was *six* months, according to Vopiscus, xxvii. 1, 1, and xxvi. 40, 4. *Eight* months results from combining the date 3rd February (xxvi. 41, 3) with 25th September (xxvii. 3, 2). But see last chapter, note 103.]

[3] Liv. i. 17. Dionys. Halicarn. l. ii. p. 115 [57]. Plutarch. in Numa, p. 60.

decline of the Roman state, far different from its infancy, was attended with every circumstance that could banish from an interregnum the prospect of obedience and harmony: an immense and tumultuous capital, a wide extent of empire, the servile equality of despotism, an army of four hundred thousand mercenaries, and the experience of frequent revolution. Yet, notwithstanding all these temptations, the discipline and memory of Aurelian still restrained the seditious temper of the troops, as well as the fatal ambition of their leaders. The flower of the legions maintained their stations on the banks of the Bosphorus, and the Imperial standard awed the less powerful camps of Rome and of the provinces. A generous though transient enthusiasm seemed to animate the military order; and we may hope that a few real patriots cultivated the returning friendship of the army and the senate, as the only expedient capable of restoring the republic to its ancient beauty and vigour.

A.D. 275, Sept. 25. The consul assembles the senate

On the twenty-fifth of September,[4] near eight months after the murder of Aurelian, the consul convoked an assembly of the senate, and reported the doubtful and dangerous situation of the empire. He slightly insinuated that the precarious loyalty of the soldiers depended on the chance of every hour and of every accident; but he represented, with the most convincing eloquence, the various dangers that might attend any farther delay in the choice of an emperor. Intelligence, he said, was already received that the Germans had passed the Rhine and occupied some of the strongest and most opulent cities of Gaul. The ambition of the Persian king kept the East in perpetual alarms; Egypt, Africa, and Illyricum were exposed to foreign and domestic arms; and the levity of Syria would prefer even a female sceptre to the asnctity of the Roman laws. The consul then, addressing himself to Tacitus, the first of the senators,[5] required his opinion on the important subject of a proper candidate for the vacant throne.

Character of Tacitus

If we can prefer personal merit to accidental greatness, we shall esteem the birth of Tacitus more truly noble than that of kings. He claimed his descent from the philosophic historian

The first of these writers relates the story like an orator, the second like a lawyer, and the third like a moralist, and none of them probably without some intermixture of fable.

[4] [This date is confirmed by xxvii. 13, 6, whereas that of the former meeting of the senate, 3rd February, is probably false.]

[5] Vopiscus (in Hist. August. p. 227 [xxvii. 4]) calls him "primæ sententiæ consularis"; and soon afterwards, *Princeps senatûs*. It is natural to suppose that the monarchs of Rome, disdaining that humble title, resigned it to the most ancient of the senators.

whose writings will instruct the last generations of mankind.[6] The senator Tacitus was then seventy-five years of age.[7] The long period of his innocent life was adorned with wealth and honours. He had twice been invested with the consular dignity,[8] and enjoyed with elegance and sobriety his ample patrimony of between two and three millions sterling.[9] The experience of so many princes, whom he had esteemed or endured, from the vain follies of Elagabalus to the useful rigour of Aurelian, taught him to form a just estimate of the duties, the dangers, and the temptations of their sublime station. From the assiduous study of his immortal ancestor he derived the knowledge of the Roman constitution and of human nature.[10] The voice of the people had already named Tacitus as the citizen the most worthy of empire. The ungrateful rumour reached his ears, and induced him to seek the retirement of one of his villas in Campania. He had passed two months in the delightful privacy of Baiæ, when he reluctantly obeyed the summons of the consul to resume his honourable place in the senate, and to assist the republic with his counsels on this important occasion.

He is elected emperor

He arose to speak, when, from every quarter of the house, he was saluted with the names of Augustus and Emperor. "Tacitus Augustus, the gods preserve thee, we choose thee for our sovereign, to thy care we intrust the republic and the world. Accept the empire from the authority of the senate. It is due to thy rank, to thy conduct, to thy manners." As soon as the tumult of acclamations subsided, Tacitus attempted to decline the dangerous honour, and to express his wonder that they should elect his age and infirmities to succeed the martial vigour of Aurelian. "Are these limbs, conscript fathers! fitted to sustain the weight of armour, or to practise the exercises of the

[6] The only objection to this genealogy is that the historian was named Cornelius, the emperor, Claudius [M. Claudius Tacitus]. But under the Lower Empire surnames were extremely various and uncertain.

[7] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 637 [28]. The Alexandrian Chronicle, by an obvious mistake, transfers that age to Aurelian.

[8] In the year 273 he was ordinary consul. But he must have been Suffectus many years before, and most probably under Valerian.

[9] *Bis millies octingenties.* Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 229 [xxvii. 10]. This sum, according to the old standard, was equivalent to eight hundred and forty thousand Roman pounds of silver, each of the value of three pounds sterling. But in the age of Tacitus the coin had lost much of its weight and purity.

[10] After his accession, he gave orders that ten copies of the historian should be annually transcribed and placed in the public libraries. The Roman libraries have long since perished, and the most valuable part of Tacitus was preserved in a single MS. and discovered in a monastery of Westphalia. See Bayle, Dictionnaire, Art. *Tacite*, Landipsius ad Annal. ii. 9.

camp? The variety of climates, and the hardships of a military life, would soon oppress a feeble constitution, which subsists only by the most tender management. My exhausted strength scarcely enables me to discharge the duty of a senator; how insufficient would it prove to the arduous labours of war and government! Can you hope that the legions will respect a weak old man, whose days have been spent in the shade of peace and retirement? Can you desire that I should ever find reason to regret the favourable opinion of the senate?" [11]

and accepts the purple

The reluctance of Tacitus, and it might possibly be sincere, was encountered by the affectionate obstinacy of the senate. Five hundred voices repeated at once, in eloquent confusion, that the greatest of the Roman princes, Numa, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, had ascended the throne in a very advanced season of life; that the mind, not the body, a sovereign, not a soldier, was the object of their choice; and that they expected from him no more than to guide by his wisdom the valour of the legions. These pressing though tumultuary instances were seconded by a more regular oration of Metius Falconius, the next on the consular bench to Tacitus himself. He reminded the assembly of the evils which Rome had endured from the vices of headstrong and capricious youths, congratulated them on the election of a virtuous and experienced senator, and, with a manly, though perhaps a selfish, freedom, exhorted Tacitus to remember the reasons of his elevation, and to seek a successor, not in his own family, but in the republic. The speech of Falconius was enforced by a general acclamation. The emperor elect submitted to the authority of his country, and received the voluntary homage of his equals. The judgment of the senate was confirmed by the consent of the Roman people, and of the Prætorian guards.[12]

Authority of the senate

The administration of Tacitus was not unworthy of his life and principles. A grateful servant of the senate, he considered that national council as the author, and himself as the subject, of the laws.[13] He studied to heal the wounds which Imperial pride, civil discord, and military violence had inflicted on the constitution, and to restore, at least, the image of the ancient republic, as it had been preserved by the policy of Augustus, and the

[11] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 227 [xxvii. 4].

[12] Hist. August. p. 228 [xxvii. 7]. Tacitus addressed the Prætorians by the appellation of *sanctissimi milites*, and the people by that of *sacratissimi Quirites*.

[13] In his manumissions he never exceeded the number of an hundred, as limited by the Caninian law, which was enacted under Augustus, and at length repealed by Justinian. See Casaubon ad locum Vopisci. [*S. C.* appears on his coins.]

virtues of Trajan and the Antonines. It may not be useless to recapitulate some of the most important prerogatives which the senate appeared to have regained by the election of Tacitus.[14] 1. To invest one of their body, under the title of emperor, with the general command of the armies and the government of the frontier provinces. 2. To determine the list, or, as it was then styled, the College of Consuls. They were twelve in number, who, in successive pairs, each during the space of two months, filled the year, and represented the dignity of that ancient office. The authority of the senate in the nomination of the consuls was exercised with such independent freedom that no regard was paid to an irregular request of the emperor in favour of his brother Florianus. "The senate," exclaimed Tacitus, with the honest transport of a patriot, "understand the character of a prince whom they have chosen." 3. To appoint the proconsuls and presidents of the provinces, and to confer on all the magistrates their civil jurisdiction. 4. To receive appeals through the intermediate office of the præfect of the city from all the tribunals of the empire. 5. To give force and validity, by their decrees, to such as they should approve of the emperor's edicts. 6. To these several branches of authority we may add some inspection over the finances, since, even in the stern reign of Aurelian, it was in their power to divert a part of the revenue from the public service.[15]

Their joy and confidence

Circular epistles were sent, without delay, to all the principal cities of the empire, Treves, Milan, Aquileia, Thessalonica, Corinth, Athens, Antioch, Alexandria, and Carthage, to claim their obedience, and to inform them of the happy revolution, which had restored the Roman senate to its ancient dignity. Two of these epistles are still extant. We likewise possess two very singular fragments of the private correspondence of the senators on this occasion. They discover the most excessive joy and the most unbounded hopes. "Cast away your indolence," it is thus that one of the senators addresses his friend, "emerge from your retirements of Baiæ and Puteoli. Give yourself to the city, to the senate. Rome flourishes, the whole republic flourishes. Thanks to the Roman army, to an army truly Roman, at length we have recovered our just authority, the

[14] See the lives of Tacitus, Florianus, and Probus, in the Augustan History; we may be well assured that whatever the soldier gave the senator had already given.

[15] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 216 [xxvi. 20]. The passage is perfectly clear: yet both Casaubon and Salmasius wish to correct it. [Est praeterea vestræ auctoritatis arca publica.]

end of all our desires. We hear appeals, we appoint proconsuls, we create emperors: perhaps, too, we may restrain them—to the wise, a word is sufficient." [16] These lofty expectations were, however, soon disappointed; nor, indeed, was it possible that the armies and the provinces should long obey the luxurious and unwarlike nobles of Rome. On the slightest touch, the unsupported fabric of their pride and power fell to the ground. The expiring senate displayed a sudden lustre, blazed for a moment, and was extinguished for ever.

A.D. 276. Tacitus is acknowledged by the army

All that had yet passed at Rome was no more than a theatrical representation, unless it was ratified by the more substantial power of the legions. Leaving the senators to enjoy their dream of freedom and ambition, Tacitus proceeded to the Thracian camp, and was there, by the Prætorian præfect, presented to the assembled troops, as the prince whom they themselves had demanded, and whom the senate had bestowed. As soon as the præfect was silent, the emperor addressed himself to the soldiers with elegance and propriety. He gratified their avarice by a liberal distribution of treasure, under the names of pay and donative. He engaged their esteem by a spirited declaration that, although his age might disable him from the performance of military exploits, his counsels should never be unworthy of a Roman general, the successor of the brave Aurelian.[17]

The Alani invade Asia, and are repulsed by Tacitus

Whilst the deceased emperor was making preparations for a second expedition into the East, he had negotiated with the Alani, a Scythian people, who pitched their tents in the neighbourhood of the lake Mæotis. Those barbarians, allured by presents and subsidies, had promised to invade Persia with a numerous body of light cavalry. They were faithful to their engagements; but, when they arrived on the Roman frontier, Aurelian was already dead, the design of the Persian war was at least suspended, and the generals, who, during the interregnum, exercised a doubtful authority, were unprepared either to receive or to oppose them. Provoked by such treatment, which they considered as trifling and perfidious, the Alani had recourse to their own valour for their payment and revenge; and, as they moved with the usual swiftness of Tartars, they had soon spread themselves over the provinces of Pontus, Cappadocia, Cilicia, and Galatia. The legions, who from the opposite shores of the

[16] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 230, 232, 233 [xxvii. 18, 19]. The senators celebrated the happy restoration with hecatombs and public rejoicings.

[17] Hist. August. p. 228 [xxvii. 8].

Bosphorus could almost distinguish the flames of the cities and villages, impatiently urged their general to lead them against the invaders. The conduct of Tacitus was suitable to his age and station. He convinced the barbarians of the faith, as well as of the power, of the empire. Great numbers of the Alani, appeased by the punctual discharge of the engagements which Aurelian had contracted with them, relinquished their booty and captives, and quietly retreated to their own deserts beyond the Phasis. Against the remainder, who refused peace, the Roman emperor waged, in person, a successful war. Seconded by an army of brave and experienced veterans, in a few weeks he delivered the provinces of Asia from the terror of the Scythian invasion.[18]

death of the Emperor Tacitus

But the glory and life of Tacitus were of short duration. Transported, in the depth of winter, from the soft retirement of Campania to the foot of Mount Caucasus, he sunk under the unaccustomed hardships of a military life. The fatigues of the body were aggravated by the cares of the mind. For a while, the angry and selfish passions of the soldiers had been suspended by the enthusiasm of public virtue. They soon broke out with redoubled violence, and raged in the camp, and even in the tent of the aged emperor. His mild and amiable character served only to inspire contempt, and he was incessantly tormented with factions which he could not assuage, and by demands which it was impossible to satisfy. Whatever flattering expectations he had conceived of reconciling the public disorders, Tacitus soon was convinced that the licentiousness of the army disdained the feeble restraint of laws, and his last hour was hastened by anguish and disappointment. It may be doubtful whether the soldiers imbrued their hands in the blood of this innocent prince.[19] It is certain that their insolence was the cause of his death. He expired at Tyana in Cappadocia, after a reign of only six months and about twenty days.[20]

A.D. 276, April 12

Usurpation and death of his brother Florianus

The eyes of Tacitus were scarcely closed before his brother

[18] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 230 [xxvii. 13]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 57 [63]. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 637 [28]. Two passages in the life of Probus (p. 236, 238 [8 and 12]) convince me that these Scythian invaders of Pontus were Alani. [Rather, Goths; cp. *Victoria Gothica*, Cohen, 6, 236; title *Gothicus Maximus*, Wilmanns, 1046.] If we may believe Zosimus (l. i. p. 58 [64]), Florianus pursued them as far as the Cimmerian Bosphorus. But he had scarcely time for so long and difficult an expedition.

[19] Eutropius [xv. 9] and Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 36] only say that he died; Victor Junior adds that it was of a fever. Zosimus [i. 63] and Zonaras [ib.] affirm that he was killed by the soldiers. Vopiscus [xxvii. 13] mentions both accounts, and seems to hesitate. Yet surely these jarring opinions are easily reconciled.

[20] According to the two Victors, he reigned exactly two hundred days.

Florianus[21] showed himself unworthy to reign, by the hasty usurpation of the purple, without expecting the approbation of the senate. The reverence for the Roman constitution, which yet influenced the camp and the provinces, was sufficiently strong to dispose them to censure, but not to provoke them to oppose, the precipitate ambition of Florianus. The discontent would have evaporated in idle murmurs, had not the general of the East, the heroic Probus, boldly declared himself the avenger of the senate. The contest, however, was still unequal; nor could the most able leader, at the head of the effeminate troops of Egypt and Syria, encounter, with any hopes of victory, the legions of Europe, whose irresistible strength appeared to support the brother of Tacitus. But the fortune and activity of Probus triumphed over every obstacle. The hardy veterans of his rival, accustomed to cold climates, sickened and consumed away in the sultry heats of Cilicia, where the summer proved remarkably unwholesome. Their numbers were diminished by frequent desertion, the passes of the mountains were feebly defended; Tarsus opened its gates, and the soldiers of Florianus, when they had permitted him to enjoy the Imperial title about three months,[22] delivered the empire from civil war by the easy sacrifice of a prince whom they despised.[23]

Their family subsists in obscurity

The perpetual revolutions of the throne had so perfectly erased every notion of hereditary right, that the family of an unfortunate emperor was incapable of exciting the jealousy of his successors. The children of Tacitus and Florianus were permitted to descend into a private station, and to mingle with the general mass of the people. Their poverty indeed became an additional safeguard to their innocence. When Tacitus was elected by the senate, he resigned his ample patrimony to the public service,[24] an act of generosity specious in appearance, but which evidently disclosed his intention of transmitting the empire to his descendants. The only consolation of their fallen state was the remembrance of transient greatness, and a distant hope, the child of a flattering prophecy, that, at the end of a thousand years, a monarch of the race of Tacitus should

[21] [M. Annius Florianus.]

[22] [*Vix duobus mensibus*, Hist. Aug. xxvii. 14; 2 months, 20 days, Eutropius.]

[23] Hist. August. p. 231 [xxvii. 14]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 58, 59 [64, 65]. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 637 [28]. Aurelius Victor says that Probus assumed the empire in Illyricum, an opinion which (though adopted by a very learned man) would throw that period of history into inextricable confusion. [Probus was *dux totius orientis*, but the army seems to have summoned him from Illyricum.]

[24] Hist. August. p. 229 [xxvii. 10, 1].

rise, the protector of the senate, the restorer of Rome, and the conqueror of the whole earth.[25]

Character and elevation of the emperor Probus

The peasants of Illyricum, who had already given Claudius and Aurelian to the sinking empire, had an equal right to glory in the elevation of Probus.[26] Above twenty years before, the emperor Valerian, with his usual penetration, had discovered the rising merit of the young soldier, on whom he conferred the rank of tribune long before the age prescribed by the military regulations. The tribune soon justified his choice by a victory over a great body of Sarmatians, in which he saved the life of a near relation of Valerian; and deserved to receive from the emperor's hand the collars, bracelets, spears, and banners, the mural and the civic crown, and all the honourable rewards reserved by ancient Rome for successful valour. The third, and afterwards the tenth, legion were intrusted to the command of Probus, who, in every step of his promotion, showed himself superior to the station which he filled. Africa and Pontus, the Rhine, the Danube, the Euphrates, and the Nile, by turns afforded him the most splendid occasions of displaying his personal prowess and his conduct in war.[27] Aurelian was indebted to him for the conquest of Egypt, and still more indebted for the honest courage with which he often checked the cruelty of his master. Tacitus, who desired by the abilities of his generals to supply his own deficiency of military talents, named him commander in chief of all the eastern provinces, with five times the usual salary, the promise of the consulship, and the hope of a triumph. When Probus ascended the Imperial throne, he was about forty-four years of age;[28] in the full possession of his fame, of the love of the army, and of a mature vigour of mind and body.

His respectful conduct towards the senate

His acknowledged merit, and the success of his arms against Florianus, left him without an enemy or a competitor. Yet, if we may credit his own professions, very far from being desirous of the empire, he had accepted it with the most sincere reluctance. "But it is no longer in my power," says Probus, in a

[25] He was to send judges to the Parthians, Persians, and Sarmatians, a president to Taprobana, and a proconsul to the Roman island (supposed by Casaubon and Salmasius to mean Britain). Such a history as mine (says Vopiscus with proper modesty) will not subsist a thousand years to expose or justify the prediction.

[26] For the private life of Probus, see Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 234-237 [xxviii. 3 *sqq.* M. Aurelius Probus, Eckhel, vii. 500.]

[27] [*Semper victorioso* which appears on coins was thus deserved before his elevation.]

[28] According to the Alexandrian Chronicle, he was fifty at the time of his death.

private letter, "to lay down a title so full of envy and of danger. I must continue to personate the character which the soldiers have imposed upon me."[29] His dutiful address to the senate displayed the sentiments, or at least the language, of a Roman patriot: "When you elected one of your order, conscript fathers! to succeed the Emperor Aurelian, you acted in a manner suitable to your justice and wisdom. For you are the legal sovereigns of the world, and the power which you derive from your ancestors will descend to your posterity. Happy would it have been, if Florianus, instead of usurping the purple of his brother, like a private inheritance, had expected what your majesty might determine, either in his favour or in that of any other person. The prudent soldiers have punished his rashness. To me they have offered the title of Augustus. But I submit to your clemency my pretensions and my merits."[30] When this respectful epistle was read by the consul, the senators were unable to dis- A.D. 276, August 3
guise their satisfaction that Probus should condescend thus humbly to solicit a sceptre which he already possessed. They celebrated with the warmest gratitude his virtues, his exploits, and above all his moderation. A decree immediately passed, without a dissenting voice, to ratify the election of the eastern armies, and to confer on their chief all the several branches of the Imperial dignity: the names of Cæsar and Augustus, the title of Father of his country, the right of making in the same day three motions in the senate,[31] the office of Pontifex Maximus, the tribunitian power, and the proconsular command; a mode of investiture, which, though it seemed to multiply the authority of the emperor, expressed the constitution of the ancient republic. The reign of Probus corresponded with this fair beginning. The senate was permitted to direct the civil administration of the empire. Their faithful general asserted the honour of the Roman arms, and often laid at their feet crowns of gold and barbaric trophies, the fruits of his numerous victories.[32] Yet,

[29] The letter was addressed to the Prætorian præfect, whom (on condition of his good behaviour) he promised to continue in his great office. See Hist. Aug. p. 237 [xxviii. 10].

[30] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 237 [ib. 11]. The date of the letter is assuredly faulty. Instead of *Non. Februar.* we may read *Non. August.* [So Tillemont and Clinton. The evidence of Alexandrian coins shows that Probus ascended the throne before 29th August, 276.]

[31] Hist. August. p. 238 [ib. 12, 8]. It is odd that the senate should treat Probus less favourably than Marcus Antoninus. That prince had received, even before the death of Pius, *Jus quintae relationis.* See Capitolin. in Hist. August. p. 24.

[32] See the dutiful letter of Probus to the senate, after his German victories. Hist. August. p. 239 [xxviii. 15].

whilst he gratified their vanity, he must secretly have despised their indolence and weakness. Though it was every moment in their power to repel the disgraceful edict of Gallienus, the proud successors of the Scipios patiently acquiesced in their exclusion from all military employments. They soon experienced that those who refuse the sword must renounce the sceptre.

Victories of Probus over the barbarians

The strength of Aurelian had crushed on every side the enemies of Rome. After his death they seemed to revive, with an increase of fury and of numbers. They were again vanquished by the active vigour of Probus, who, in a short reign of about six years,[33] equalled the fame of ancient heroes, and restored peace and order to every province of the Roman world. The dangerous frontier of Rhætia he so firmly secured, that he left it without the suspicion of an enemy. He broke the wandering power of the Sarmatian tribes, and by the terror of his arms compelled those barbarians to relinquish their spoil. The Gothic nation courted the alliance of so warlike an emperor.[34] He attacked [278] the Isaurians in their mountains, besieged and took several of their strongest castles,[35] and flattered himself that he had for ever suppressed a domestic foe, whose independence so deeply wounded the majesty of the empire. The troubles excited by the usurper Firmus in the Upper Egypt had never been perfectly appeased, and the cities of Ptolemais and Coptos, fortified by the alliance of the Blemmyes, still maintained an obscure rebellion. The chastisement of those cities, and of their auxiliaries the savages of the South, is said to have alarmed the court of Persia,[36] and the Great King sued in vain for the friendship of Probus. Most of the exploits which distinguished his reign were achieved by the personal valour and conduct of the emperor, insomuch that the writer of his life expresses some amazement how, in so short a time, a single man could be present in so many distant wars. The remaining actions he intrusted to the care of his lieutenants, the judicious choice of whom forms no inconsiderable part of his glory. Carus, Diocletian, Maximian, Constantius,

[33] The date and duration of the reign of Probus are very correctly ascertained by Cardinal Noris, in his learned work, De Epochis Syro-Macedonum, p. 96-105. A passage of Eusebius connects the second year of Probus with the æras of several of the Syrian cities.

[34] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 239 [xxviii. 16, 3, omnes *Geticos* populos].

[35] Zosimus (l. i. p. 62-65 [69]) tells a very long and trifling story of Lydius the Isaurian robber.

[36] Zosim. l. i. p. 65 [71]. Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 239, 240 [xxviii. 17, 4 and 18, 1]. But it seems incredible that the defeat of the savages of Æthiopia could affect the Persian monarch. [There is no proof that Probus was in Egypt during his reign; but he celebrated the successes against the Blemmyes and the annexation of Ptolemais with a costly triumph.]

Galerius, Asclepiodatus, Annibalianus, and a crowd of other chiefs, who afterwards ascended or supported the throne, were trained to arms in the severe school of Aurelian and Probus.[37]

A.D. 277. He delivers Gaul from the invasion of the Germans

But the most important service which Probus rendered to the republic was the deliverance of Gaul, and the recovery of seventy flourishing cities oppressed by the barbarians of Germany, who, since the death of Aurelian, had ravaged that great province with impunity.[38] Among the various multitude of those fierce invaders we may distinguish, with some degree of clearness, three great armies, or rather nations, successively vanquished by the valour of Probus. He drove back the Franks into their morasses; a descriptive circumstance from whence we may infer that the confederacy known by the manly appellation of *Free* already occupied the flat maritime country, intersected and almost overflown by the stagnating waters of the Rhine, and that several tribes of the Frisians and Batavians had acceded to their alliance. He vanquished the Burgundians, a considerable people of the Vandalic race. They had wandered in quest of booty from the [278] banks of the Oder to those of the Seine. They esteemed themselves sufficiently fortunate to purchase, by the restitution of all their booty, the permission of an undisturbed retreat. They attempted to elude that article of the treaty. Their punishment was immediate and terrible.[39] But of all the invaders of Gaul, the most formidable were the Lygians, a distant people who reigned over a wide domain on the frontiers of Poland and Silesia.[40] In the Lygian nation, the Arii held the first rank by their numbers and fierceness. "The Arii (it is thus that they are described by the energy of Tacitus) study to improve by art and circumstances the innate terrors of their barbarism. Their shields are black, their bodies are painted black. They choose for the combat the darkest hour of the night. Their host advances, covered as it were with a funereal shade;[41] nor do they

[37] Besides these well-known chiefs, several others are named by Vopiscus (Hist. August. p. 241 [ib. 22]), whose actions have not reached our knowledge.

[38] See the Cæsars of Julian, and Hist. August. p. 238, 240, 241 [ib. 15, 18].

[39] Zosimus, l. i. p. 62 [67, 68]. Hist. August. p. 240 [*leg.* 238, ib. 14]. But the latter supposes the punishment inflicted with the consent of their kings; if so, it was partial, like the offence. [In 277 Probus himself drove back the Alamanni "beyond the Neckar and the Alba" (=Rauhe Alp of Swabia) while his generals repelled the Franks. The Burgundian victory was perhaps in 278.]

[40] See Cluver. Germania Antiqua, l. iii. Ptolemy places in their country the city of Calisia, probably Calish in Silesia. [The author has made too much of the Λογίωνες mentioned by Zosimus (ib.). It is quite uncertain who this people was.]

[41] *Feralis umbra* is the expression of Tacitus: it is surely a very bold one. [A misapprehension. *Umbra* is ablative and *feralis* agrees with *exercitus*.]

often find an enemy capable of sustaining so strange and infernal an aspect. Of all our senses, the eyes are the first vanquished in battle."[42] Yet the arms and discipline of the Romans easily discomfited these horrid phantoms. The Lygii were defeated in a general engagement, and Semno, the most renowned of their chiefs, fell alive into the hands of Probus. That prudent emperor, unwilling to reduce a brave people to despair, granted them an honourable capitulation, and permitted them to return in safety to their native country. But the losses which they suffered in the march, the battle, and the retreat, broke the power of the nation: nor is the Lygian name ever repeated in the history either of Germany or of the empire. The deliverance of Gaul is reported to have cost the lives of four hundred thousand of the invaders; a work of labour to the Romans, and of expense to the emperor, who gave a piece of gold for the head of every barbarian.[43] But, as the fame of warriors is built on the destruction of human kind, we may naturally suspect that the sanguinary account was multiplied by the avarice of the soldiers, and accepted without any very severe examination by the liberal vanity of Probus.

and carries his arms into Germany

Since the expedition of Maximin, the Roman generals had confined their ambition to a defensive war against the nations of Germany, who perpetually pressed on the frontiers of the empire. The more daring Probus pursued his Gallic victories, passed the Rhine, and displayed his invincible eagles on the banks of the Elbe and the Neckar.[44] He was fully convinced that nothing could reconcile the minds of the barbarians to peace, unless they experienced in their own country the calamities of war. Germany, exhausted by the ill success of the last emigration, was astonished by his presence. Nine of the most considerable princes repaired to his camp, and fell prostrate at his feet. Such a treaty was humbly received by the Germans, as it pleased the conqueror to dictate. He exacted a strict restitution of the effects and captives which they had carried away from the provinces; and obliged their own magistrates to punish the more obstinate robbers who presumed to detain any part of the spoil. A considerable tribute of corn, cattle and horses, the only wealth of barbarians, was reserved for the use of the garrisons which Probus established on the limits of their

[277]

[42] Tacit. Germania (c. 43).

[43] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 238 [ib. 15].

[44] [These events belong to the year 277, and the reduction of the Alamanni. See above, note 39, where *Albam*, which Gibbon took for *Albim*, is explained.]

territory. He even entertained some thoughts of compelling the Germans to relinquish the exercise of arms, and to trust their differences to the justice, their safety to the power, of Rome. To accomplish these salutary ends, the constant residence of an Imperial governor, supported by a numerous army, was indispensably requisite. Probus therefore judged it more expedient to defer the execution of so great a design; which was indeed rather of specious than solid utility.[45] Had Germany been reduced into the state of a province, the Romans, with immense labour and expense, would have acquired only a more extensive boundary to defend against the fiercer and more active barbarians of Scythia.

He builds a wall from the Rhine to the Danube

Instead of reducing the warlike natives of Germany to the condition of subjects, Probus contented himself with the humble expedient of raising a bulwark against their inroads. The country which now forms the circle of Swabia had been left desert in the age of Augustus by the emigration of its ancient inhabitants.[46] The fertility of the soil soon attracted a new colony from the adjacent provinces of Gaul. Crowds of adventurers, of a roving temper and of desperate fortunes, occupied the doubtful possession, and acknowledged, by the payment of tithes, the majesty of the empire.[47] To protect these new subjects, a line of frontier garrisons was gradually extended from the Rhine to the Danube. About the reign of Hadrian, when that mode of defence began to be practised, these garrisons were connected and covered by a strong intrenchment of trees and palisades. In the place of so rude a bulwark, the emperor Probus constructed a stone wall of a considerable height, and strengthened it by towers at convenient distances. From the neighbourhood of Neustadt and Ratisbon on the Danube, it stretched across hills, valleys, rivers, and morasses, as far as Wimpfen on the Neckar, and at length terminated on the banks of the Rhine, after a winding course of near two hundred miles.[48] This

[45] Hist. August. p. 238, 239 [ib. 14, 15]. Vopiscus quotes a letter from the emperor to the senate, in which he mentions his design of reducing Germany into a province.

[46] Strabo, l. vii. [p. 290]. According to Velleius Paterculus (ii. 108) Maroboduus led his Marcomanni into Bohemia: Cluverius (Germ. Antiq. iii. 8) proves that it was from Swabia.

[47] These settlers, from the payment of tithes, were denominated *Decumates*. [Tacit. Germania, c. 29.]

[48] See notes de l'Abbé de la Bléterie à la Germanie de Tacite, p. 183. His account of the wall is chiefly borrowed (as he says himself) from the *Alsatia Illustrata* of Schœpflin. [For the Germanic limes see Appendix 21.]

important barrier, uniting the two mighty streams that protected the provinces of Europe, seemed to fill up the vacant space through which the barbarians, and particularly the Alemanni, could penetrate with the greatest facility into the heart of the empire. But the experience of the world, from China to Britain, has exposed the vain attempt of fortifying any extensive tract of country.[49] An active enemy, who can select and vary his points of attack, must, in the end, discover some feeble spot or unguarded moment. The strength as well as the attention of the defenders is divided; and such are the blind effects of terror on the firmest troops, that a line broken in a single place is almost instantly deserted. The fate of the wall which Probus erected may confirm the general observation. Within a few years after his death, it was overthrown by the Alemanni. Its scattered ruins, universally ascribed to the power of the Dæmon, now serve only to excite the wonder of the Swabian peasant.

Introduction and settlement of the barbarians

Among the useful conditions of peace, imposed by Probus on the vanquished nations of Germany, was the obligation of supplying the Roman army with sixteen thousand recruits, the bravest and most robust of their youth. The emperor dispersed them through all the provinces, and distributed this dangerous reinforcement in small bands, of fifty or sixty each, among the national troops; judiciously observing that the aid which the republic derived from the barbarians should be felt but not seen.[50] Their aid was now become necessary. The feeble elegance of Italy and the internal provinces could no longer support the weight of arms. The hardy frontier of the Rhine and Danube still produced minds and bodies equal to the labours of the camp; but a perpetual series of wars had gradually diminished their numbers. The infrequency of marriage, and the ruin of agriculture, affected the principles of population, and not only destroyed the strength of the present, but intercepted the hope of future generations. The wisdom of Probus embraced a great and beneficial plan of replenishing the exhausted frontiers, by new colonies of captive or fugitive barbarians, on whom he bestowed lands, cattle, instruments of husbandry, and every

[49] See Recherches sur les Chinois et les Egyptiens, tom. ii. p. 81-102. The anonymous author [de Pauw] is well acquainted with the globe in general, and with Germany in particular: with regard to the latter, he quotes a work of M. Hanselman; but he seems to confound the wall of Probus, designed against the Alemanni, with the fortification of the Mattiaci, constructed in the neighbourhood of Frankfort against the Catti.

[50] He distributed about fifty or sixty barbarians to a *Numerus*, as it was then called, a corps with whose established number we are not exactly acquainted.

encouragement that might engage them to educate a race of soldiers for the service of the republic. Into Britain, and most probably into Cambridgeshire,[51] he transported a considerable body of Vandals. The impossibility of an escape reconciled them to their situation, and in the subsequent troubles of that island they approved themselves the most faithful servants of the state.[52] Great numbers of Franks and Gepidæ were settled on the banks of the Danube and the Rhine. An hundred thousand Bastarnæ, expelled from their own country, cheerfully accepted an establishment in Thrace, and soon imbibed the manners and sentiments of Roman subjects.[53] But the expectations of Probus were too often disappointed. The impatience and idleness of the barbarians could ill brook the slow labours of agriculture. Their unconquerable love of freedom, rising against despotism, provoked them into hasty rebellions, alike fatal to themselves and to the provinces;[54] nor could these artificial supplies, however repeated by succeeding emperors, restore the important limit of Gaul and Illyricum to its ancient and native vigour.

Daring enterprise of the Franks

Of all the barbarians who abandoned their new settlements, and disturbed the public tranquillity, a very small number returned to their own country. For a short season they might wander in arms through the empire; but in the end they were surely destroyed by the power of a warlike emperor. The successful rashness of a party of Franks was attended, however, with such memorable consequences, that it ought not to be passed unnoticed. They had been established by Probus on the sea-coast of Pontus, with a view of strengthening that frontier against the inroads of the Alani. A fleet stationed in one of the harbours of the Euxine fell into the hands of the Franks; and they resolved, through unknown seas, to explore their way from the mouth of the Phasis to that of the Rhine. They easily escaped through the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, and, cruising along the Mediterranean, indulged their appetite for revenge and plunder by frequent descents on the unsuspecting shores of Asia, Greece, and Africa. The opulent city of Syracuse, in whose port the navies of Athens and Carthage had formerly been sunk, was sacked by a handful of barbarians, who massacred

[51] Camden's Britannia, Introduction, p. 136; but he speaks from a very doubtful conjecture.

[52] Zosimus, l. i. p. 62 [68]. According to Vopiscus, another body of Vandals was less faithful.

[53] Hist. August. p. 240 [ib. 18]. They were probably expelled by the Goths. Zosim. l. i. p. 66 [71].

[54] Hist. August. p. 240 [ib.].

the greatest part of the trembling inhabitants. From the island of Sicily the Franks proceeded to the columns of Hercules, trusted themselves to the ocean, coasted round Spain and Gaul, and, steering their triumphant course through the British channel, at length finished their surprising voyage by landing in safety on the Batavian or Frisian shores.[55] The example of their success, instructing their countrymen to conceive the advantages, and to despise the dangers, of the sea, pointed out to their enterprising spirit a new road to wealth and glory.

Revolt of Saturninus in the East

Notwithstanding the vigilance and activity of Probus, it was almost impossible that he could at once contain in obedience every part of his wide-extended dominions. The barbarians, who broke their chains, had seized the favourable opportunity of a domestic war. When the emperor marched to the relief of Gaul, he devolved the command of the East on Saturninus. That general, a man of merit and experience, was driven into rebellion by the absence of his sovereign, the levity of the Alexandrian people, the pressing instances of his friends, and his own fears; but from the moment of his elevation he never entertained a hope of empire, or even of life. "Alas!" he said, "the republic has lost a useful servant, and the rashness of an hour has destroyed the services of many years. You know not," continued he, "the misery of sovereign power: a sword is perpetually suspended over our head. We dread our very guards, we distrust our companions. The choice of action or of repose is no longer in our disposition, nor is there any age, or character, or conduct, that can protect us from the censure of envy. In thus exalting me to the throne, you have doomed me to a life of cares, and to an untimely fate. The only consolation which remains is the assurance that I shall not fall alone."[56] But, as the former part of his prediction was verified by the victory, so the latter was disappointed by the clemency, of Probus. That amiable prince attempted even to save the unhappy Saturninus from the fury of the soldiers. He had more than once solicited
A.D. 279 the usurper himself to place some confidence in the mercy of a sovereign who so highly esteemed his character, that he had punished, as a malicious informer, the first who related the improbable news of his defection.[57] Saturninus might, perhaps,

[55] Panegyr. Vet. v. 18 [ed. Bährens, p. 145]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 66 [71].

[56] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 245, 246 [xxix. 10]. The unfortunate orator had studied rhetoric at Carthage, and was therefore more probably a Moor (Zosim. l. i. p. 60 [66]) than a Gaul, as Vopiscus calls him.

[57] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 638 [29].

have embraced the generous offer, had he not been restrained by the obstinate distrust of his adherents. Their guilt was deeper, and their hopes more sanguine, than those of their experienced leader.

A.D. 280. Of Bonosus and Proculus in Gaul

The revolt of Saturninus was scarcely extinguished in the East, before new troubles were excited in the West by the rebellion of Bonosus and Proculus in Gaul. The most distinguished merit of those two officers was their respective prowess, of the one in the combats of Bacchus, of the other in those of Venus;[58] yet neither of them were destitute of courage and capacity, and both sustained, with honour, the august character which the fear of punishment had engaged them to assume, till they sunk at length beneath the superior genius of Probus. He used the victory with his accustomed moderation, and spared the fortunes as well as the lives of their innocent families.[59]

A.D. 281. Triumph of the emperor Probus

The arms of Probus had now suppressed all the foreign and domestic enemies of the state. His mild but steady administration confirmed the re-establishment of the public tranquillity; nor was there left in the provinces a hostile barbarian, a tyrant, or even a robber, to revive the memory of past disorders. It was time that the emperor should revisit Rome, and celebrate his own glory and the general happiness. The triumph due to the valour of Probus was conducted with a magnificence suitable to his fortune, and the people who had so lately admired the trophies of Aurelian gazed with equal pleasure on those of his heroic successor.[60] We cannot, on this occasion, forget the desperate courage of about fourscore Gladiators, reserved, with near six hundred others, for the inhuman sports of the amphitheatre. Disdaining to shed their blood for the amusement of the populace, they killed their keepers, broke from the place of their confinement, and filled the streets of Rome with blood and confusion. After an obstinate resistance they were overpowered and cut in pieces by the regular forces; but they obtained at least an honourable death, and the satisfaction of a just revenge.[61]

[58] A very surprising instance is recorded of the prowess of Proculus. He had taken one hundred Sarmatian virgins. The rest of the story we must relate in his own language. Ex his unâ nocte decem inivi: omnes tamen, quod in me erat, mulieres intra dies quindecim reddidi. Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 246 [ib. 12].

[59] Proculus, who was a native of Albengue on the Genoese coast, armed two thousand of his own slaves. His riches were great, but they were acquired by robbery. It was afterwards a saying of his family, Nec latrones esse, nec principes sibi placere. Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 247 [ib. 13: sibi non placere esse vel principes vel latrones].

[60] Hist. August. p. 240 [xxviii. 19].

[61] Zosim. l. i. p. 66 [71].

His discipline

The military discipline which reigned in the camps of Probus was less cruel than that of Aurelian, but it was equally rigid and exact. The latter had punished the irregularities of the soldiers with unrelenting severity, the former prevented them by employing the legions in constant and useful labours. When Probus commanded in Egypt, he executed many considerable works for the splendour and benefit of that rich country. The navigation of the Nile, so important to Rome itself, was improved; and temples, bridges, porticoes, and palaces, were constructed by the hands of the soldiers, who acted by turns as architects, as engineers, and as husbandmen.[62] It was reported of Hannibal that, in order to preserve his troops from the dangerous temptations of idleness, he had obliged them to form large plantations of olive trees along the coast of Africa.[63] From a similar principle, Probus exercised his legions in covering with rich vineyards the hills of Gaul and Pannonia, and two considerable spots are described, which were entirely dug and planted by military labour.[64] One of these, known under the name of Mount Alma, was situated near Sirmium, the country where Probus was born, for which he ever retained a partial affection, and whose gratitude he endeavoured to secure by converting into tillage a large and unhealthy track of marshy ground. An army thus employed constituted perhaps the most useful, as well as the bravest, portion of the Roman subjects.

His death

But, in the prosecution of a favourite scheme, the best of men, satisfied with the rectitude of their intentions, are subject to forget the bounds of moderation; nor did Probus himself sufficiently consult the patience and disposition of his fierce legionaries.[65] The dangers of the military profession seem only to be compensated by a life of pleasure and idleness; but, if the duties of the soldier are incessantly aggravated by the labours of the peasant, he will at last sink under the intolerable burden, or shake it off with indignation. The imprudence of Probus is said to have inflamed the discontent of his troops. More attentive

[62] Hist. August. p. 236 [ib. 9].

[63] Aurel. Victor in Prob. But the policy of Hannibal, unnoticed by any more ancient writer, is irreconcileable with the history of his life. He left Africa when he was nine years old, returned to it when he was forty-five, and immediately lost his army in the decisive battle of Zama. Livius, xxx. 37 [*leg.* 35].

[64] Hist. August. p. 240 [ib. 18, 8]. Eutrop. ix. 17. Aurel. Victor in Prob. Victor Junior [ep. 37, 3]. He revoked the prohibition of Domitian, and granted a general permission of planting vines to the Gauls, the Britons, and the Pannonians.

[65] Julian bestows a severe, and indeed excessive, censure on the rigour of Probus, who, as he thinks, almost deserved his fate. [In the *Cæsars.*]

to the interests of mankind than to those of the army, he expressed the vain hope that, by the establishment of universal peace, he should soon abolish the necessity of a standing and mercenary force.[66] The unguarded expression proved fatal to him. In one of the hottest days of summer, as he severely urged the unwholesome labour of draining the marshes of Sirmium, the soldiers, impatient of fatigue, on a sudden threw down their tools, grasped their arms, and broke out into a furious mutiny. The emperor, conscious of his danger, took refuge in a lofty tower, constructed for the purpose of surveying the progress of the work.[67] The tower was instantly forced, and a thousand swords were plunged at once into the bosom of the unfortunate Probus. The rage of the troops subsided as soon as it had been gratified. They then lamented their fatal rashness, forgot the severity of the emperor whom they had massacred, and hastened to perpetuate, by an honourable monument, the memory of his virtues and victories.[68]

A.D. 282, August

When the legions had indulged their grief and repentance for the death of Probus, their unanimous consent declared Carus, his Prætorian præfect, the most deserving of the Imperial throne. Every circumstance that relates to this prince appears of a mixed and doubtful nature. He gloried in the title of Roman Citizen; and affected to compare the purity of *his* blood with the foreign, and even barbarous, origin of the preceding emperors: yet the most inquisitive of his contemporaries, very far from admitting his claim, have variously deduced his own birth, or that of his parents, from Illyricum, from Gaul, or from Africa.[69] Though a soldier, he had received a learned education; though a senator,

Election and character of Carus

[66] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 241 [ib. 20, 3-6]. He lavishes on this idle hope a large stock of very foolish eloquence.

[67] Turris ferrata. It seems to have been a moveable tower, and cased with iron. Carus (according to Greek sources) was proclaimed Imperator in Rætia before the death of Probus. In fact the hesitation of Probus about proceeding to quell the rebellion seems to have been the immediate cause of his fall. See Anon. Contin. of Dio, 5, and John of Antioch, fr. 160 (F. H. G. iv.).]

[68] Probus, et vere probus situs est: Victor omnium gentium Barbararum; victor etiam tyrannorum. [He survived the 29th August, 276, we know by Alexandrian coins. There is some variation in the sources as to the length of his reign. Hist. Aug. xxviii. 21, he was killed in the fifth year of his reign; Aurelius Victor, Cæs. 37, 4, he reigned somewhat less than six years, epit. 37, 1, six years; Cassiodorus, Chron., he reigned six years, three months; Orosius, 7, 24, gives him six years, four months.]

[69] Yet all this may be conciliated. He was born at Narbonne [Narona] in Illyricum, confounded by Eutropius with the more famous city of that name in Gaul. His father might be an African, and his mother a noble Roman. [M. Aurelius] Carus himself was educated in the capital. See Scaliger, Animadversion. ad Euseb. Chron. p. 241.

he was invested with the first dignity of the army; and, in an age when the civil and military professions began to be irrecoverably separated from each other, they were united in the person of Carus. Notwithstanding the severe justice which he exercised against the assassins of Probus, to whose favour and esteem he was highly indebted, he could not escape the suspicion of being accessary to a deed from whence he derived the principal advantage. He enjoyed, at least before his elevation, an acknowledged character of virtue and abilities:[70] but his austere temper insensibly degenerated into moroseness and cruelty; and the imperfect writers of his life almost hesitate whether they shall not rank him in the number of Roman tyrants.[71] When Carus assumed the purple, he was about sixty years of age, and his two sons, Carinus and Numerian, had already attained the season of manhood.[72]

The sentiments of the senate and people

The authority of the senate expired with Probus; nor was the repentance of the soldiers displayed by the same dutiful regard for the civil power which they had testified after the unfortunate death of Aurelian. The election of Carus was decided without expecting the approbation of the senate, and the new emperor contented himself with announcing, in a cold and stately epistle, that he had ascended the vacant throne.[73] A behaviour so very opposite to that of his amiable predecessor afforded no favourable presage of the new reign; and the Romans, deprived of power and freedom, asserted their privilege of licentious murmurs.[74] The voice of congratulation and flattery was not however silent; and we may still peruse, with pleasure and contempt, an eclogue, which was composed on the accession of the emperor Carus. Two shepherds, avoiding the noon-tide heat, retire into the cave of Faunus. On a spreading beech they discover some recent characters. The rural deity had described, in prophetic verses, the felicity promised to the empire under the reign of so great a prince. Faunus hails the approach of that hero, who, receiving

[70] Probus had requested of the senate an equestrian statue and a marble palace, at the public expense, as a just recompens of the singular merit of Carus. Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 249 [xxx. 6].

[71] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 242, 249 [xxix. 1, xxx. 3]. Julian excludes the Emperor Carus and both his sons from the banquet of the Cæsars.

[72] John Malala, tom. i. p. 401. But the authority of that ignorant Greek is very slight. He ridiculously derives from Carus the city of Carrhæ, and the province of Caria, the latter of which is mentioned by Homer. [The names of the sons were M. Aurelius Carinus and M. Aurelius Numerianus].

[73] Hist. Aug. p. 249 [xxx. 5]. Carus congratulated the senate, that one of their own order was made emperor.

[74] Hist. Aug. p. 242 [xxviii. 24].

on his shoulders the sinking weight of the Roman world, shall extinguish war and faction, and once again restore the innocence and security of the golden age.[75]

Caras defeats the Sarmatians, and marches into the East

It is more than probable that these elegant trifles never reached the ears of a veteran general, who, with the consent of the legions, was preparing to execute the long-suspended design of the Persian war. Before his departure for this distant expedition, Carus conferred on his two sons, Carinus and Numerian, the title of Cæsar; and, investing the former with almost an equal share of the Imperial power, directed the young prince, first to suppress some troubles which had arisen in Gaul, and afterwards to fix the seat of his residence at Rome, and to assume the government of the Western provinces.[76] The safety of Illyricum was confirmed by a memorable defeat of the Sarmatians;[77] sixteen thousand of those barbarians remained on the field of battle, and the number of captives amounted to twenty thousand. The old emperor, animated with the fame and prospect of victory, pursued his march, in the midst of winter, through the countries of Thrace and Asia Minor, and at length, with his younger son, Numerian, arrived on the confines of the Persian monarchy. There, encamping on the summit of a lofty mountain, he pointed out to his troops the opulence and luxury of the enemy whom they were about to invade.

A.D. 283. He gives audience to the Persian ambassadors

The successor of Artaxerxes, Varanes or Bahram, though he had subdued the Segestans, one of the most warlike nations of Upper Asia,[78] was alarmed at the approach of the Romans and endeavoured to retard their progress by a negotiation of peace. His ambassadors entered the camp about sunset, at the time when the troops were satisfying their hunger with a frugal repast. The Persians expressed their desire of being introduced to the presence of the Roman emperor. They were at length conducted to a soldier, who was seated on the grass. A piece of stale bacon and a few hard peas composed his supper. A coarse woollen garment of purple was the only circumstance that announced his dignity. The conference was conducted with the same disregard of courtly elegance. Carus, taking off a cap which he wore to

[75] See the first eclogue of Calphurnius. The design of it is preferred by Fontenelle to that of Virgil's Pollio. See tom. iii. p. 148. [See above, chap. xi. note 88.]

[76] Hist. August. p. 250 [xxx. 7]. Eutropius, ix. 18. Pagi, Annal.

[77] [And Quadi, see Eckhel, 7, 522.]

[78] Agathias, l. iv. p. 135. We find one of his sayings in the Bibliothèque Orientale of M. d'Herbelot. "The definition of humanity includes all other virtues." [The Persian king was Varahran II.]

conceal his baldness, assured the ambassadors that, unless their master acknowledged the superiority of Rome, he would speedily render Persia as naked of trees as his own head was destitute of hair.[79] Notwithstanding some traces of art and preparation, we may discover, in this scene, the manners of Carus, and the severe simplicity which the martial princes, who succeeded Gallienus, had already restored in the Roman camps. The ministers of the Great King trembled and retired.

His victories and extraordinary death

The threats of Carus were not without effect. He ravaged Mesopotamia, cut in pieces whatever opposed his passage, made himself master of the great cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon (which seem to have surrendered without resistance), and carried his victorious arms beyond the Tigris.[80] He had seized the favourable moment for an invasion. The Persian councils were distracted by domestic factions, and the greater part of their forces were detained on the frontiers of India. Rome and the East received with transport the news of such important advantages. Flattery and hope painted, in the most lively colours, the fall of Persia, the conquest of Arabia, the submission of Egypt, and a lasting deliverance from the inroads of the Scythian nations.[81] But the reign of Carus was destined to expose the vanity of predictions. They were scarcely uttered before they were contradicted by his death; an event attended with such ambiguous circumstances, that it may best be related in a letter from his own secretary to the præfect of the city. "Carus," says he, "our dearest emperor, was confined by sickness to his bed, when a furious tempest arose in the camp. The darkness which overspread the sky was so thick, that we could no longer distinguish each other; and the incessant flashes of lightning took from us the knowledge of all that passed in the general confusion. Immediately after the most violent clap of thunder, we heard a sudden cry that the emperor was dead; and it soon appeared that his chamberlains, in a rage of grief, had set fire to the royal pavilion, a circumstance which gave rise to the report that Carus was killed by lightning. But, as far as we have

A.D. 283, December 25

[79] Synesius tells this story of Carinus: and it is much more natural to understand it of Carus than (as Petavius and Tillemont choose to do) of Probus.

[80] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 250 [ib.]. Eutropius, ix. 18. The two Victors.

[81] To the Persian victory of Carus, I refer the dialogue of the *Philopatris*, which has so long been an object of dispute among the learned. But to explain and justify my opinion would require a dissertation. [This dialogue, always printed with Lucian's works, has been held to belong to the reign of Heraclius, by R. Crampe, *Philopatris*, 1894.] But cp. below, vol ii. p. 531.

been able to investigate the truth, his death was the natural effect of his disorder." [82]

He is succeeded by his two sons Carinus and Numerian

The vacancy of the throne was not productive of any disturbance. The ambition of the aspiring generals was checked by their mutual fears, and young Numerian, with his absent brother Carinus, were unanimously acknowledged as Roman emperors. The public expected that the successor of Carus would pursue his father's footsteps, and, without allowing the Persians to recover from their consternation, would advance sword in hand to the palaces of Susa and Ecbatana.[83] But the legions, however strong in numbers and discipline, were dismayed by the most abject superstition. Notwithstanding all the arts that were practised to disguise the manner of the late emperor's death, it was found impossible to remove the opinion of the multitude, and the power of opinion is irresistible. Places or persons struck with lightning were considered by the ancients with pious horror, as singularly devoted to the wrath of Heaven.[84] An oracle was remembered, which marked the river Tigris as the fatal boundary of the Roman arms. The troops, terrified with the fate of Carus and with their own danger, called aloud on young Numerian to obey the will of the gods, and to lead them away from this inauspicious scene of war. The feeble emperor was unable to subdue their obstinate prejudice, and the Persians wondered at the unexpected retreat of a victorious enemy.[85]

A.D. 284. Vices of Carinus

The intelligence of the mysterious fate of the late emperor was soon carried from the frontiers of Persia to Rome; and the senate, as well as the provinces, congratulated the accession of the sons of Carus. These fortunate youths were strangers, however, to that conscious superiority, either of birth or of merit, which can alone render the possession of a throne easy, and as it were natural. Born and educated in a private station, the election of their father raised them at once to the rank of princes; and his death, which happened about sixteen months afterwards, left them the unexpected legacy of a vast empire. To sustain with temper this rapid elevation, an uncommon share of virtue

[82] Hist. August. p. 250 [xxx. 8]. Yet Eutropius, Festus, Rufus, the two Victors, Jerome, Sidonius Apollinaris, Syncellus, and Zonaras, all ascribe the death of Carus to lightning. [It took place before Aug. 29, 283.]

[83] See Nemesian. Cynegeticon, v. 71, &c.

[84] See Festus and his commentators, on the word *Scribonianum*. *Places* struck with lightning were surrounded with a wall; *things* were buried with mysterious ceremony.

[85] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 250 [xxx. 9]. Aurelius Victor seems to believe the prediction, and to approve the retreat.

and prudence was requisite; and Carinus, the elder of the brothers, was more than commonly deficient in those qualities. In the Gallic war, he discovered some degree of personal courage;[86] but, from the moment of his arrival at Rome, he abandoned himself to the luxury of the capital, and to the abuse of his fortune. He was soft, yet cruel; devoted to pleasure, but destitute of taste; and, though exquisitely susceptible of vanity, indifferent to the public esteem. In the course of a few months, he successively married and divorced nine wives,[87] most of whom he left pregnant; and, notwithstanding this legal inconstancy, found time to indulge such a variety of irregular appetites as brought dishonour on himself and on the noblest houses of Rome. He beheld with inveterate hatred all those who might remember his former obscurity, or censure his present conduct. He banished or put to death the friends and counsellors whom his father had placed about him to guide his inexperienced youth; and he persecuted with the meanest revenge his school-fellows and companions, who had not sufficiently respected the latent majesty of the emperor. With the senators, Carinus affected a lofty and regal demeanour, frequently declaring that he designed to distribute their estates among the populace of Rome. From the dregs of that populace he selected his favourites, and even his ministers. The palace, and even the Imperial table, was filled with singers, dancers, prostitutes, and all the various retinue of vice and folly. One of his door-keepers[88] he intrusted with the government of the city. In the room of the Prætorian præfect, whom he put to death, Carinus substituted one of the ministers of his looser pleasures. Another who possessed the same, or even a more infamous, title to favour, was invested with the consulship. A confidential secretary, who had acquired uncommon skill in the art of forgery, delivered the indolent emperor, with his own consent, from the irksome duty of signing his name.

When the Emperor Carus undertook the Persian war, he was induced, by motives of affection as well as policy, to secure the fortunes of his family by leaving in the hands of his eldest son the armies and provinces of the West. The intelligence

[86] Nemesian. Cynegeticon, v. 69. He was a contemporary, but a poet.

[87] [The name of one of his wives, Magnia Urbica, is now known; C.I.L. 8, 2384.]

[88] *Cancellarius.* This word, so humble in its origin, has, by a singular fortune, risen into the title of the first great office of state in the monarchies of Europe. See Casaubon and Salmasius, ad Hist. August. p. 253 [xxx. 16].

which he soon received of the conduct of Carinus filled him with shame and regret; nor had he concealed his resolution of satisfying the republic by a severe act of justice, and of adopting, in the place of an unworthy son, the brave and virtuous Constantius, who at that time was governor of Dalmatia. But the elevation of Constantius was for a while deferred; and, as soon as a father's death had released Carinus from the control of fear or decency, he displayed to the Romans the extravagancies of Elagabalus, aggravated by the cruelty of Domitian.[89]

He celebrates the Roman games

The only merit of the administration of Carinus that history could record or poetry celebrate was the uncommon splendour with which, in his own and his brother's name, he exhibited the Roman games of the theatre, the circus, and the amphitheatre. More than twenty years afterwards, when the courtiers of Diocletian represented to their frugal sovereign the fame and popularity of his munificent predecessor, he acknowledged that the reign of Carinus had indeed been a reign of pleasure.[90] But this vain prodigality, which the prudence of Diocletian might justly despise, was enjoyed with surprise and transport by the Roman people. The oldest of the citizens, recollecting the spectacles of former days, the triumphal pomp of Probus or Aurelian, and the secular games of the emperor Philip, acknowledged that they were all surpassed by the superior magnificence of Carinus.[91]

Spectacles of Rome

The spectacles of Carinus may therefore be best illustrated by the observation of some particulars, which history has condescended to relate concerning those of his predecessors. If we confine ourselves solely to the hunting of wild beasts, however we may censure the vanity of the design or the cruelty of the execution, we are obliged to confess that neither before nor since the time of the Romans so much art and expense have ever been lavished for the amusement of the people.[92] By the order of Probus, a great quantity of large trees, torn up by the roots, were transplanted into the midst of the circus. The spacious

[89] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 253, 254 [xxx. 16, 17]. Eutropius, ix. 19. Victor Junior. The reign of Diocletian, indeed, was so long and prosperous, that it must have been very unfavourable to the fame of Carinus.

[90] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 254 [xxx. 17]. He calls him Carus, but the sense is sufficiently obvious, and the words were often confounded.

[91] See Calphurnius. Eclog. vii. 43. We may observe that the spectacles of Probus were still recent, and that the poet is seconded by the historian. [See chap. xi. note 88.]

[92] The philosopher Montaigne (Essais, l. iii. 6) gives a very just and lively view of Roman magnificence in these spectacles.

and shady forest was immediately filled with a thousand ostriches, a thousand stags, a thousand fallow deer, and a thousand wild boars; and all this variety of game was abandoned to the riotous impetuosity of the multitude. The tragedy of the succeeding day consisted in the massacre of an hundred lions, an equal number of lionesses, two hundred leopards, and three hundred bears.[93] The collection prepared by the younger Gordian for his triumph, and which his successor exhibited in the secular games, was less remarkable by the number than by the singularity of the animals. Twenty Zebras displayed their elegant forms and variegated beauty to the eyes of the Roman people.[94] Ten elks, and as many camelopards, the loftiest and most harmless creatures that wander over the plains of Sarmatia and Æthiopia, were contrasted with thirty African hyænas, and ten Indian tigers, the most implacable savages of the torrid zone. The unoffending strength with which Nature has endowed the greater quadrupedes was admired in the rhinoceros, the hippopotamus of the Nile,[95] and a majestic troop of thirty-two elephants.[96] While the populace gazed with stupid wonder on the splendid show, the naturalist might indeed observe the figure and properties of so many different species, transported from every part of the ancient world into the amphitheatre of Rome. But this accidental benefit which science might derive from folly is surely insufficient to justify such a wanton abuse of the public riches. There occurs, however, a single instance in the first Punic war, in which the senate wisely connected this amusement of the multitude with the interest of the state. A considerable number of elephants, taken in the defeat of the Carthaginian army, were driven through the circus by a few slaves, armed only with blunt javelins.[97] The useful spectacle served to impress the Roman soldier with a just contempt for those unwieldy animals; and he no longer dreaded to encounter them in the ranks of war.

The amphitheatre

The hunting or exhibition of wild beasts was conducted with

[93] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 240 [xxviii. 19].

[94] They are called *Onagri;* but the number is too inconsiderable for mere wild asses. Cuper (de Elephantis Exercitat. ii. 7) has proved from Oppian, Dion, and an anonymous Greek, that zebras had been seen at Rome. They were brought from some island of the ocean, perhaps Madagascar.

[95] Carinus gave an hippopotamus (see Calphurn. Eclog. vii. 66). In the later spectacles, I do not recollect any crocodiles, of which Augustus once exhibited thirty-six. Dion Cassius, l. lv. p. 781 [10].

[96] Capitolin. in Hist. August. p. 164, 165 [xx. 32, 33]. We are not acquainted with the animals whom he calls *archeleontes*, some read *argoleontes* [Salmasius], others *agrioleontes* [Scaliger]: both corrections are very nugatory.

[97] Plin. Hist. Natur. viii. 6, from the annals of Piso.

a magnificence suitable to a people who styled themselves the masters of the world; nor was the edifice appropriated to that entertainment less expressive of Roman greatness. Posterity admires, and will long admire, the awful remains of the amphitheatre of Titus, which so well deserved the epithet of Colossal.[98] It was a building of an elliptic figure, five hundred and sixty-four feet in length, and four hundred and sixty-seven in breadth, founded on fourscore arches, and rising, with four successive orders of architecture, to the height of one hundred and forty feet.[99] The outside of the edifice was encrusted with marble, and decorated with statues. The slopes of the vast concave, which formed the inside, were filled and surrounded with sixty or eighty rows of seats, of marble likewise, covered with cushions, and capable of receiving with ease above fourscore thousand spectators.[100] Sixty-four *vomitories* (for by that name the doors were very aptly distinguished) poured forth the immense multitude; and the entrances, passages, and staircases were contrived with such exquisite skill, that each person, whether of the senatorial, the equestrian, or the plebeian order, arrived at his destined place without trouble or confusion.[101] Nothing was omitted which, in any respect, could be subservient to the convenience and pleasure of the spectators. They were protected from the sun and rain by an ample canopy, occasionally drawn over their heads. The air was continually refreshed by the playing of fountains, and profusely impregnated by the grateful scent of aromatics. In the centre of the edifice, the *arena*, or stage, was strewed with the finest sand, and successively assumed the most different forms. At one moment it seemed to rise out of the earth, like the garden of the Hesperides, and was afterwards broken into the rocks and caverns of Thrace. The subterraneous pipes conveyed an inexhaustible supply of water; and what had just before appeared a level plain, might be suddenly converted into a wide lake, covered with armed vessels, and

[98] See Maffei, Verona Illustrata, P. iv. l. i. c. 2.

[99] Maffei, l. ii. c. 2. The height was very much exaggerated by the ancients. It reached almost to the heavens, according to Calphurnius (Eclog. vii. 23), and surpassed the ken of human sight, according to Ammianus Marcellinus (xvi. 10). Yet how trifling to the great pyramid of Egypt, which rises five hundred feet perpendicular!

[100] According to different copies of Victor, we read seventy-seven thousand, or eighty-seven thousand spectators; but Maffei (l. ii. c. 12) finds room on the open seats for no more than thirty-four thousand. The remainder were contained in the upper covered galleries.

[101] See Maffei, l. ii. c. 5-12. He treats the very difficult subject with all possible clearness, and like an architect, as well as an antiquarian.

replenished with the monsters of the deep.[102] In the decoration of these scenes the Roman emperors displayed their wealth and liberality; and we read on various occasions that the whole furniture of the amphitheatre consisted either of silver, or of gold, or of amber.[103] The poet who describes the games of Carinus, in the character of a shepherd attracted to the capital by the fame of their magnificence, affirms that the nets designed as a defence against the wild beasts were of gold wire; that the porticos were gilded; and that the *belt* or circle which divided the several ranks of spectators from each other was studded with a precious Mosaic of beautiful stones.[104]

A.D. 284, Sept. 12

In the midst of this glittering pageantry, the Emperor Carinus, secure of his fortune, enjoyed the acclamations of the people, the flattery of his courtiers, and the songs of the poets, who, for want of a more essential merit, were reduced to celebrate the divine graces of his person.[105] In the same hour, but at the distance of nine hundred miles from Rome, his brother expired; and a sudden revolution transferred into the hands of a stranger the sceptre of the house of Carus.[106]

Return of Numerian with the army from Persia

The sons of Carus never saw each other after their father's death. The arrangements which their new situation required were probably deferred till the return of the younger brother to Rome, where a triumph was decreed to the young emperors, for the glorious success of the Persian war.[107] It is uncertain whether they intended to divide between them the administration or the provinces of the empire; but it is very unlikely that their union would have proved of any long duration. The jealousy of power must have been inflamed by the opposition of characters. In the most corrupt of times, Carinus was unworthy to live: Numerian deserved to reign in a happier period. His affable manners and gentle virtues secured him, as soon as they

[102] Calphurn. Eclog. vii. 64, 73. These lines are curious, and the whole Eclogue has been of infinite use to Maffei. Calphurnius, as well as Martial (see his first book), was a poet, but when they described the amphitheatre, they both wrote from their own senses, and to those of the Romans.

[103] Consult Plin. Hist. Natur. xxxiii. 16, xxxvii. 11.

[104] Balteus en gemmis, en inlita porticus auro.
Certatim radiant, &c. Calphurn. vii. [47].

[105] Et Martis vultus et Apollinis esse putavi, says Calphurnius; but John Malala, who had perhaps seen pictures of Carinus, describes him as thick, short, and white, tom. i. p. 403.

[106] With regard to the time when these Roman games were celebrated, Scaliger, Salmasius and Cuper, have given themselves a great deal of trouble to perplex a very clear subject.

[107] Nemesianus (in the Cynegeticon) seems to anticipate in his fancy that auspicious day [80 *sqq.*].

became known, the regard and affections of the public. He possessed the elegant accomplishments of a poet and orator, which dignify as well as adorn the humblest and the most exalted station. His eloquence, however it was applauded by the senate, was formed not so much on the model of Cicero, as on that of the modern declaimers; but in an age very far from being destitute of poetical merit, he contended for the prize with the most celebrated of his contemporaries, and still remained the friend of his rivals; a circumstance which evinces either the goodness of his heart, or the superiority of his genius.[108] But the talents of Numerian were rather of the contemplative than of the active kind. When his father's elevation reluctantly forced him from the shade of retirement, neither his temper nor his pursuits had qualified him for the command of armies. His constitution was destroyed by the hardships of the Persian war; and he had contracted, from the heat of the climate,[109] such a weakness in his eyes as obliged him, in the course of a long retreat, to confine himself to the solitude and darkness of a tent or litter. The administration of all affairs, civil as well as military, was devolved on Arrius Aper, the Prætorian præfect, who to the power of his important office added the honour of being father-in-law to Numerian. The Imperial pavilion was strictly guarded by his most trusty adherents; and, during many days, Aper delivered to the army the supposed mandates of their invisible sovereign.[110]

Death of Numerian

It was not till eight months after the death of Carus that the Roman army, returning by slow marches from the banks of the Tigris, arrived on those of the Thracian Bosphorus. The legions halted at Chalcedon in Asia, while the court passed over to Heraclea, on the European side of the Propontis.[111] But a report soon circulated through the camp, at first in secret whispers, and at length in loud clamours, of the emperor's death, and of the presumption of his ambitious minister, who

[108] He won all the crowns from Nemesianus, with whom he vied in didactic poetry. [*Nam et cum Olympio Nemesiano contendit qui* ἁλιευτικὰ κυνηγετικὰ et ναυτικὰ *scripsit inque omnibus colonis inlustratus emicuit.*] The senate erected a statue to the son of Carus, with a very ambiguous inscription, "To the most powerful of orators". See Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 251 [xxx. 11].

[109] A more natural cause at least, than that assigned by Vopiscus (Hist. August. p. 251 [ib. 12]), incessant weeping for his father's death.

[110] In the Persian war, Aper was suspected of a design to betray Carus. Hist. August. p. 250 [xxx. 8].

[111] We are obliged to the Alexandrian Chronicle, p. 274, for the knowledge of the time and place where Diocletian was elected emperor. [Chronicon Pasch. i. 510, ed. Bonn.]

still exercised the sovereign power in the name of a prince who was no more. The impatience of the soldiers could not long support a state of suspense. With rude curiosity they broke into the Imperial tent, and discovered only the corpse of Numerian.[112] The gradual decline of his health might have induced them to believe that his death was natural; but the concealment was interpreted as an evidence of guilt, and the measures which Aper had taken to secure his election became the immediate occasion of his ruin. Yet, even in the transport of their rage and grief, the troops observed a regular proceeding, which proves how firmly discipline had been re-established by the martial successors of Gallienus. A general assembly of the army was appointed to be held at Chalcedon, whither Aper was transported in chains, as a prisoner and a criminal. A vacant tribunal was erected in the midst of the camp, and the generals and tribunes formed a great military council. They soon announced to the multitude that their choice had fallen on Diocletian, commander of the domestics or body-guards,[113] as the person the most capable of revenging and succeeding their beloved emperor. The future fortunes of the candidate depended on the chance or conduct of the present hour. Conscious that the station which he had filled exposed him to some suspicions, Diocletian ascended the tribunal, and, raising his eyes towards the Sun, made a solemn profession of his own innocence, in the presence of that all-seeing Deity.[114] Then, assuming the tone of a sovereign and a judge, he commanded that Aper should be brought in chains to the foot of the tribunal. "This man," said he, "is the murderer of Numerian"; and, without giving him time to enter on a dangerous justification, drew his sword, and buried it in the breast of the unfortunate præfect.[115] A charge supported by such decisive proof was admitted without contradiction, and the legions, with repeated acclamations, acknowledged the justice and authority of the emperor Diocletian.[116]

A.D. 284, Sept. 17. Election of the emperor Diocletian

[112] Hist. August. p. 251 [xxx. 12]. Eutrop. ix. 18. Hieronym. in Chron. According to these *judicious* writers, the death of Numerian was discovered by the stench of his dead body. Could no aromatics be found in the imperial household?

[113] [C. Aurelius Valerius Diocletianus. He was *comes domesticorum.*]

[114] Aurel. Victor [Cæs. 39]. Eutropius, ix. 20. Hieronym. in Chron.

[115] [Vopiscus was informed by his grandfather, an eye-witness of this scene, that Diocletian uttered the famous words of Æneas: *Æneae magni dextra cadis* (Virg. *Æn.* x. 830).]

[116] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 252 [ib. 14, 15]. The reason why Diocletian killed *Aper* (a wild boar), was founded on a prophecy and a pun, as foolish as they are well known.

Before we enter upon the memorable reign of that prince, it will be proper to punish and dismiss the unworthy brother of Numerian. Carinus possessed arms and treasures sufficient to support his legal title to the empire.[117] But his personal vices overbalanced every advantage of birth and situation. The most faithful servants of the father despised the incapacity, and dreaded the cruel arrogance, of the son. The hearts of the people were engaged in favour of his rival, and even the senate was inclined to prefer an usurper to a tyrant. The arts of Diocletian inflamed the general discontent; and the winter was employed in secret intrigues, and open preparations for a civil war. In the spring the forces of the East and of the West encountered each other in the plains of Margus, a small city of Mæsia, in the neighbourhood of the Danube.[118] The troops, so lately returned from the Persian war, had acquired their glory at the expense of health and numbers, nor were they in a condition to contend with the unexhausted strength of the legions of Europe. Their ranks were broken, and, for a moment, Diocletian despaired of the purple and of life. But the advantage which Carinus had obtained by the valour of his soldiers he quickly lost by the infidelity of his officers. A tribune, whose wife he had seduced, seized the opportunity of revenge, and by a single blow extinguished civil discord in the blood of the adulterer.[119]

Defeat and death of Carinus

A.D. 285, May [?]

[117] [And also a certain measure of energy. In his struggle against Diocletian he gained successes before his final defeat. See Hist. Aug. ib. 18, 2. And he suppressed a tyrant in Pannonia, one M. Aurelius Julianus (perhaps *corrector* of Venetia). Aur. Vict. Cæs. 39. John of Antioch, 163.]

[118] Eutropius marks its situation very accurately; it was between the Mons Aureus and Viminacium. M. d'Anville (Géographie Ancienne, tom i. p. 304) places Margus at Kastolatz in Servia, a little below Belgrade and Semendria. [It is where the river Margus, now Morawa, joins the Danube. Cp. Chron. of 354, p. 648, and Jordanes, Rom. 295. Diocletian called the province of Upper Mœsia *Margensis* in memory of this victory.]

[119] Hist. August. p. 254 [ib. 18]. Eutropius, ix. 20. Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 39]. Victor in Epitome [38].

CHAPTER XIII

The reign of Diocletian and his three associates, Maximian, Galerius, and Constantius—General re-establishment of order and tranquillity—The Persian war, victory, and triumph—The new form of administration—Abdication and retirement of Diocletian and Maximian

Elevation and character of Diocletian, A.D. 285 [17 Sept. 284]

As the reign of Diocletian was more illustrious than that of any of his predecessors, so was his birth more abject and obscure. The strong claims of merit and of violence had frequently superseded the ideal prerogatives of nobility; but a distinct line of separation was hitherto preserved between the free and the servile part of mankind. The parents of Diocletian had been slaves in the house of Anulinus, a Roman senator; nor was he himself distinguished by any other name than that which he derived from a small town in Dalmatia, from whence his mother deduced her origin.[1] It is, however, probable, that his father obtained the freedom of the family, and that he soon acquired an office of scribe, which was commonly exercised by persons of his condition.[2] Favourable oracles, or rather the consciousness of superior merit, prompted his aspiring son to pursue the profession of arms and the hopes of fortune; and it would be extremely curious to observe the gradation of arts and accidents which enabled him in the end to fulfil those oracles, and to display that merit to the world. Diocletian was successively promoted to the government of Mæsia, the honours of the consulship, and the important command of the guards of the palace. He distinguished his abilities in the Persian war; and, after the death of Numerian, the slave, by the confession and judgment of his rivals, was declared the most worthy of the Imperial

[1] Eutrop. ix. 19. Victor in Epitom. [39 1]. The town seems to have been properly Doclia, from the small tribe of Illyrians (see Cellarius, Geograph. Antiqua, tom. i. p. 393); and the original name of the fortunate slave was probably Docles; he first lengthened it to the Grecian harmony of Diocles, and at length to the Roman majesty of Diocletianus. He likewise assumed the Patrician name of Valerius, and it is usually given him by Aurelius Victor.

[2] See Dacier on the sixth satire of the second book of Horace. Cornel. Nepos, in Vit. Eumen. c. 1.

throne. The malice of religious zeal, whilst it arraigns the savage fierceness of his colleague Maximian, has affected to cast suspicions on the personal courage of the Emperor Diocletian.[3] It would not be easy to persuade us of the cowardice of a soldier of fortune, who acquired and preserved the esteem of the legions, as well as the favour of so many warlike princes. Yet even calumny is sagacious enough to discover and to attack the most vulnerable part. The valour of Diocletian was never found inadequate to his duty, or to the occasion; but he appears not to have possessed the daring and generous spirit of a hero, who courts danger and fame, disdains artifice, and boldly challenges the allegiance of his equals. His abilities were useful rather than splendid; a vigorous mind, improved by the experience and study of mankind, dexterity and application in business; a judicious mixture of liberality and economy, of mildness and rigour; profound dissimulation under the disguise of military frankness; steadiness to pursue his ends; flexibility to vary his means; and above all the great art of submitting his own passions, as well as those of others, to the interest of his ambition, and of colouring his ambition with the most specious pretences of justice and public utility. Like Augustus, Diocletian may be considered as the founder of a new empire.[4] Like the adopted son of Cæsar, he was distinguished as a statesman rather than a warrior; nor did either of those princes employ force, whenever their purpose could be effected by policy.

His clemency and victory

The victory of Diocletian was remarkable for its singular mildness. A people accustomed to applaud the clemency of the conqueror, if the usual punishments of death, exile and confiscation were inflicted with any degree of temper and equity, beheld with the most pleasing astonishment a civil war, the flames of which were extinguished in the field of battle. Diocletian received into his confidence Aristobulus, the principal minister of the house of Carus, respected the lives, the fortunes, and the dignity of his adversaries, and even continued in their respective stations the greater number of the servants of Carinus.[5] It is

[3] Lactantius (or whoever was the author of the little treatise De Mortibus Persecutorum [see Appendix 1]) accuses Diocletian of *timidity* in two places, c. 7, 8. In chap. 9, he says of him, "erat in omni tumultu meticulosus et animi dejectus".

[4] [It is usual to express this fact by saying that the Principate founded by Augustus was transformed by Diocletian into an absolute Monarchy.]

[5] In this encomium, Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 39, 5] seems to convey a just, though indirect, censure of the cruelty of Constantius. It appears from the Fasti, that Aristobulus remained præfect of the city, and that he ended with Diocletian the consulship which he had commenced with Carinus.

not improbable that motives of prudence might assist the humanity of the artful Dalmatian; of these servants many had purchased his favour by secret treachery; in others, he esteemed their grateful fidelity to an unfortunate master. The discerning judgment of Aurelian, of Probus, and of Carus, had filled the several departments of the state and army with officers of approved merit, whose removal would have injured the public service, without promoting the interest of the successor. Such a conduct, however, displayed to the Roman world the fairest prospect of the new reign, and the emperor affected to confirm this favourable prepossession by declaring that, among all the virtues of his predecessors, he was the most ambitious of imitating the humane philosophy of Marcus Antoninus.[6]

Association and character of Maximian, A.D. 286, April 1

The first considerable action of his reign seemed to evince his sincerity as well as his moderation. After the example of Marcus, he gave himself a colleague in the person of Maximian, on whom he bestowed at first the title of Cæsar, and afterwards that of Augustus.[7] But the motives of his conduct, as well as the object of his choice, were of a very different nature from those of his admired predecessor. By investing a luxurious youth with the honours of the purple, Marcus had discharged a debt of private gratitude, at the expense, indeed, of the happiness of the state. By associating a friend and a fellow-soldier to the labours of government, Diocletian, in a time of public danger, provided for the defence both of the East and of the West. Maximian was born a peasant, and, like Aurelian, in the territory of Sirmium. Ignorant of letters,[8] careless of laws, the rusticity of his appearance and manners still betrayed in the most elevated fortune the meanness of his extraction. War was the only art which he professed. In a long course of service, he had distinguished

[6] Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 39] styles Diocletian, "Parentem potius quam Dominum". See Hist. August. p. 30 [iv. 19].

[7] The question of the time when Maximian received the honours of Cæsar and Augustus has divided modern critics, and given occasion to a great deal of learned wrangling. I have followed M. de Tillemont (Histoire des Empereurs, tom. iv. p. 500-505), who has weighed the several reasons and difficulties with his scrupulous accuracy. [The question has been since discussed by Mommsen (*Abhandlungen* of the Berlin Academy for 1860). Maximian seems to have been named Cæsar, with tribunician power, soon after 17th Sept. 285, and to have become Augustus with full imperial powers 1st April, 286.]

[8] In an oration delivered before him (Panegyr. Vet. ii. 8.), Mamertinus expresses a doubt whether his hero, in imitating the conduct of Hannibal and Scipio, had ever heard of their names. From thence we may fairly infer that Maximian was more desirous of being considered as a soldier, than as a man of letters, and it is in this manner that we can often translate the language of flattery into that of truth. [We can still trace his rough features on coins.]

himself on every frontier of the empire; and, though his military talents were formed to obey rather than to command, though, perhaps, he never attained the skill of a consummate general, he was capable, by his valour, constancy, and experience, of executing the most arduous undertakings. Nor were the vices of Maximian less useful to his benefactor. Insensible to pity, and fearless of consequences, he was the ready instrument of every act of cruelty which the policy of that artful prince might at once suggest and disclaim. As soon as a bloody sacrifice had been offered to prudence or to revenge, Diocletian, by his seasonable intercession, saved the remaining few whom he had never designed to punish, gently censured the severity of his stern colleague, and enjoyed the comparison of a golden and an iron age, which was universally applied to their opposite maxims of government. Notwithstanding the difference of their characters, the two emperors maintained, on the throne, that friendship which they had contracted in a private station. The haughty turbulent spirit of Maximian, so fatal afterwards to himself and to the public peace, was accustomed to respect the genius of Diocletian, and confessed the ascendant of reason over brutal violence.[9] From a motive either of pride or superstition, the two emperors assumed the titles, the one of Jovius, the other of Herculius. Whilst the motion of the world (such was the language of their venal orators) was maintained by the all-seeing wisdom of Jupiter, the invincible arm of Hercules purged the earth of monsters and tyrants.[10]

Association of two Cæsars, Galerius and Constantius, A.D. 292 [293], March 1

But even the omnipotence of Jovius and Herculius was insufficient to sustain the weight of the public administration. The prudence of Diocletian discovered that the empire, assailed on every side by the barbarians, required on every side the presence of a great army, and of an emperor. With this view he resolved once more to divide his unwieldy power, and, with the inferior title of *Cæsars*, to confer on two generals of approved merit an equal share of the sovereign authority.[11] Galerius, surnamed Armentarius, from

[9] Lactantius de M. P. c. 8. Aurelius Victor [ib.]. As among the Panegyrics we find orations pronounced in praise of Maximian, and others which flatter his enemies at his expense, we derive some knowledge from the contrast.

[10] See the second and third Panegyrics, particularly iii. 3, 10, 14, but it would be tedious to copy the diffuse and affected expressions of their false eloquence. With regard to the titles, consult Aurel. Victor, Lactantius de M. P. c. 52. Spanheim de Usu Numismatum, &c. Dissertat. xii. 8. [The titles have importance as showing that, though the colleagues were formally co-equal, Diocletian held a certain primacy.]

[11] Aurelius Victor. Victor in Epitome. Eutrop. ix. 22. Lactant. de M. P. c. 8. Hieronym. in Chron. [For date cp. Diocletian's edict *de pretiis;* the two

his original profession of a herdsman, and Constantius, who from his pale complexion had acquired the denomination of Chlorus,[12] were the two persons invested with the second honours of the Imperial purple. In describing the country, extraction, and manners of Herculius, we have already delineated those of Galerius, who was often, and not improperly, styled the younger Maximian, though in many instances both of virtue and ability he appears to have possessed a manifest superiority over the elder. The birth of Constantius was less obscure than that of his colleagues. Eutropius, his father, was one of the most considerable nobles of Dardania, and his mother was the niece of the Emperor Claudius.[13] Although the youth of Constantius had been spent in arms, he was endowed with a mild and amiable disposition, and the popular voice had long since acknowledged him worthy of the rank which he at last attained. To strengthen the bonds of political, by those of domestic, union, each of the emperors assumed the character of a father to one of the Cæsars, Diocletian to Galerius, and Maximian to Constantius; and each, obliging them to repudiate their former wives, bestowed his daughter in marriage on his adopted son.[14] These four princes distributed among themselves the wide extent of the Roman empire. The defence of Gaul, Spain,[15] and Britain, was intrusted to Constantius: Galerius was stationed on the banks of the Danube, as the safeguard of the Illyrian provinces. Italy and Africa were considered as the department of Maximian, and, for his peculiar portion, Diocletian reserved Thrace, Egypt, and the rich countries of Asia. Every one was sovereign within his own jurisdiction;[16] but their united authority extended over

Departments and harmony of the four princes

Cæsars have *trib. pot.* ix. in 301 A.D. See Incert. Paneg. Constantio Cæs. 2-4. Chron. Pasch. i. 512. Mommsen, *loc. cit.* Also C.I.L. 2, 1439.]

[12] It is only among the modern Greeks that Tillemont can discover his appellation of Chlorus. Any remarkable degree of paleness seems inconsistent with the *rubor* mentioned in Panegyric. v. 19. [Their names on their elevation became: C. Galerius Valerius Maximianus, and M. Flavius Valerius Constantius.]

[13] Julian, the grandson of Constantius boasts that his family was derived from the warlike Mæsians. Misopogon, p. 348. The Dardanians dwelt on the [southern] edge of Mæsia.

[14] Galerius married Valeria, the daughter of Diocletian; if we speak with strictness, Theodora, the wife of Constantius, was daughter only to the wife of Maximian. Spanheim Dissertat. xi. 2.

[15] This division agrees with that of the four præfectures; yet there is some reason to doubt whether Spain was not a province of Maximian. See Tillemont, tom. iv. p. 517. [Lactantius, 8, says that Maximian had Spain, and he is probably right. On the contrary Aurelius Victor, Cæs. 39, 30, gives him only Africa and Italy; and so Julian, Or. 2, 51, D, who distinctly assigns Spain to Constantius.]

[16] [This statement must be qualified in regard to the Cæsars, who had no legislative power, no control over the Imperial revenue, no consistorium. Nor had they

the whole monarchy; and each of them was prepared to assist his colleagues with his counsels or presence. The Cæsars, in their exalted rank, revered the majesty of the emperors, and the three younger princes invariably acknowledged, by their gratitude and obedience, the common parent of their fortunes. The suspicious jealousy of power found not any place among them; and the singular happiness of their union has been compared to a chorus of music, whose harmony was regulated and maintained by the skilful hand of the first artist.[17]

Series of events

This important measure was not carried into execution till about six years after the association of Maximian, and that interval of time had not been destitute of memorable incidents. But we have preferred, for the sake of perspicuity, first to describe the more perfect form of Diocletian's government, and afterwards to relate the actions of his reign, following rather the natural order of the events than the dates of a very doubtful chronology.

A.D. 287. State of the peasants of Gaul

The first exploit of Maximian, though it is mentioned in a few words by our imperfect writers, deserves, from its singularity, to be recorded in a history of human manners. He suppressed the peasants of Gaul, who, under the appellation of Bagaudæ,[18] had risen in a general insurrection; very similar to those which in the fourteenth century successively afflicted both France and England.[19] It should seem that very many of those institutions, referred by an easy solution to the feudal system, are derived from the Celtic barbarians. When Cæsar subdued the Gauls, that great nation was already divided into three orders of men; the clergy, the nobility, and the common people. The first governed by superstition, the second by arms, but the third and last was not of any weight or account in their public councils. It was very natural for the Plebeians, oppressed by debt or apprehensive of injuries, to implore the protection of some powerful chief, who acquired over their persons and property the same absolute rights as, among the Greeks and Romans, a master

the right of appointing the officials in their dominions. Their military powers were dependent on the Augusti, to whom all their victories were ascribed. They wore the purple, but not the diadem.]

[17] Julian in Cæsarib. p. 315. Spanheim's notes to the French translation, p. 122.

[18] The general name of *Bagaudæ* (in the signification of Rebels) continued till the fifth century in Gaul. Some critics derive it from a Celtic word, *Bagad*, a tumultuous assembly. Scaliger ad Euseb. Du Cange Glossar. [For the social state of Gaul, and the action of the priests, cp. Salvian, de Gubern. Dei, v. 5, 6.]

[19] Chronique de Froissart, vol. i. c. 182, ii. 73-79. The *naiveté* of his story is lost in our best modern writers.

exercised over his slaves.[20] The greatest part of the nation was gradually reduced into a state of servitude; compelled to perpetual labour on the estates of the Gallic nobles, and confined to the soil, either by the real weight of fetters, or by the no less cruel and forcible restraints of the laws. During the long series of troubles which agitated Gaul, from the reign of Gallienus to that of Diocletian, the condition of these servile peasants was peculiarly miserable; and they experienced at once the complicated tyranny of their masters, of the barbarians, of the soldiers, and of the officers of the revenue.[21]

Their rebellion

Their patience was at last provoked into despair. On every side they rose in multitudes, armed with rustic weapons, and with irresistible fury. The ploughman became a foot-soldier, the shepherd mounted on horseback, the deserted villages and open towns were abandoned to the flames, and the ravages of the peasants equalled those of the fiercest barbarians.[22] They asserted the natural rights of men, but they asserted those rights with the most savage cruelty. The Gallic nobles, justly dreading their revenge, either took refuge in the fortified cities, or fled from the wild scene of anarchy. The peasants reigned without control; and two of their most daring leaders had the folly and rashness to assume the Imperial ornaments.[23] Their power soon expired at the approach of the legions. The strength of union and discipline obtained an easy victory over a licentious and divided multitude.[24] A severe retaliation was inflicted on the peasants who were found in arms; the affrighted remnant returned to their respective habitations, and their unsuccessful effort for freedom served only to confirm their slavery. So strong and uniform is the current of popular passions that we might almost venture, from very scanty materials, to relate the particulars of this war; but we are not disposed to believe that the principal leaders Ælianus and Amandus were Christians,[25] or to insinuate that the rebellion, as it happened in the time of Luther,

and chastisement

[20] Cæsar de Bell. Gallic. vi. 13. Orgetorix, the Helvetian, could arm for his defence a body of ten thousand slaves.

[21] Their oppression and misery are acknowledged by Eumenius (Panegyr. vi 8). Gallias efferatas injuriis.

[22] Panegyr. Vet. ii. 4. Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 39].

[23] Ælianus and Amandus. We have medals coined by them. Goltzius in Thes. R. A. p. 117, 121. [See Eckhel, 8, 41, but they are condemned as spurious by Cohen.]

[24] Levibus prælüis domuit. Eutrop. ix. 20.

[25] The fact rests indeed on very slight authority, a life of St. Babolinus, which is probably of the seventh century. See Duchesne Scriptores Rer. Francicar. tom. i. p. 662.

was occasioned by the abuse of those benevolent principles of Christianity which inculcate the natural freedom of mankind.

A.D. 287. [A.D. 286.] Revolt of Carausius in Britain

Maximian had no sooner recovered Gaul from the hands of the peasants, than he lost Britain by the usurpation of Carausius. Ever since the rash but successful enterprise of the Franks under the reign of Probus, their daring countrymen had constructed squadrons of light brigantines, in which they incessantly ravaged the provinces adjacent to the ocean.[26] To repel their desultory incursions, it was found necessary to create a naval power; and the judicious measure was pursued with prudence and vigour. Gessoriacum or Boulogne, in the streights of the British channel, was chosen by the emperor for the station of the Roman fleet; and the command of it was intrusted to Carausius, a Menapian of the meanest origin,[27] but who had long signalized his skill as a pilot, and his valour as a soldier. The integrity of the new admiral corresponded not with his abilities. When the German pirates sailed from their own harbours, he connived at their passage, but he diligently intercepted their return, and appropriated to his own use an ample share of the spoil which they had acquired. The wealth of Carausius was, on this occasion, very justly considered as an evidence of his guilt; and Maximian had already given orders for his death. But the crafty Menapian foresaw and prevented the severity of the emperor. By his liberality he had attached to his fortunes the fleet which he commanded, and secured the barbarians in his interest. From the port of Boulogne he sailed over to Britain, persuaded the legion and the auxiliaries which guarded that island to embrace his party, and boldly assuming, with the Imperial purple, the title of Augustus, defied the justice and the arms of his injured sovereign.[28]

Importance of Britain

When Britain was thus dismembered from the empire, its importance was sensibly felt, and its loss sincerely lamented. The Romans celebrated, and perhaps magnified, the extent of that noble island, provided on every side with convenient harbours;

[26] Aurelius Victor calls them Germans. Eutropius (ix. 21) gives them the name of Saxons [(Mare) quod *Franci et Saxones* infestabant]. But Eutropius lived in the ensuing century, and seems to use the language of his time.

[27] The three expressions of Eutropius, Aurelius Victor, and Eumenius, "vilissime natus," "Bataviæ alumnus," and "Menapiæ civis," give us a very doubtful account of the birth of Carausius. Stukely, however (Hist. of Carausius, p. 62), chooses to make him a native of St. David's and a prince of the blood royal of Britain. The former idea he had found in Richard of Cirencester, p. 44.

[28] Panegyr. v. 12. Britain at this time was secure, and slightly guarded. [For coins with *Exspectate veni* and *Genius Britanniae* see Eckhel, 8, 45.]

the temperature of the climate, and the fertility of the soil, alike adapted for the production of corn or of vines; the valuable minerals with which it abounded; its rich pastures covered with innumerable flocks, and its woods free from wild beasts or venomous serpents. Above all, they regretted the large amount of the revenue of Britain, whilst they confessed that such a province well deserved to become the seat of an independent monarchy.[29] During the space of seven [30] years, it was possessed by Carausius; and fortune continued propitious to a rebellion supported with courage and ability. The British emperor defended the frontiers of his dominions against the Caledonians of the North, invited from the continent a great number of skilful artists, and displayed, on a variety of coins that are still extant, his taste and opulence. Born on the confines of the Franks, he courted the friendship of that formidable people, by the flattering imitation of their dress and manners. The bravest of their youth he enlisted among his land or sea forces; and, in return for their useful alliance, he communicated to the barbarians the dangerous knowledge of military and naval arts. Carausius still preserved the possession of Boulogne and the adjacent country. His fleets rode triumphant in the channel, commanded the mouths of the Seine and of the Rhine, ravaged the coasts of the ocean, and diffused, beyond the Columns of Hercules, the terror of his name. Under his command, Britain, destined in a future age to obtain the empire of the sea, already assumed its natural and respectable station of a maritime power.[31]

Power of Carausius

A.D. 289. acknowledged by the other emperors

By seizing the fleet of Boulogne, Carausius had deprived his master of the means of pursuit and revenge. And, when, after vast expense of time and labour, a new armament was launched into the water,[32] the Imperial troops, unaccustomed to that

[29] Panegyr. Vet. v. 11, vii. 9. The orator Eumenius wished to exalt the glory of the hero (Constantius), with the importance of the conquest. Notwithstanding our laudable partiality for our native country, it is difficult to conceive that in the beginning of the fourth century England deserved *all* these commendations. A century and a half before, it hardly paid its own establishment. See Appian in Procem.

[30] [Six. See Appendix 22.]

[31] As a great number of medals of Carausius are still preserved, he is become a very favourite object of antiquarian curiosity, and every circumstance of his life and actions has been investigated with sagacious accuracy. Dr. Stukely in particular has devoted a large volume to the British emperor. I have used his materials, and rejected most of his fanciful conjectures.

[32] When Mamertinus pronounced his first Panegyric [21st April, 289], the naval preparations of Maximian were completed: and the orator presaged an assured victory. His silence in the second Panegyric, might alone inform us that the expedition had not succeeded.

element, were easily baffled and defeated by the veteran sailors of the usurper. This disappointed effort was soon productive of a treaty of peace. Diocletian and his colleague, who justly dreaded the enterprising spirit of Carausius, resigned to him the sovereignty of Britain, and reluctantly admitted their perfidious servant to a participation of the Imperial honours.[33] But the adoption of the two Cæsars restored new vigour to the Roman arms; and, while the Rhine was guarded by the presence of Maximian, his brave associate, Constantius, assumed the conduct of the British war. His first enterprise was against the important place of Boulogne. A stupendous mole, raised across the entrance of the harbour, intercepted all hopes of relief. The town surrendered after an obstinate defence; and a considerable part of the naval strength of Carausius fell into the hands of the besiegers. During the three years, which Constantius employed in preparing a fleet adequate to the conquest of Britain, he secured the coast of Gaul, invaded the country of the Franks, and deprived the usurper of the assistance of those powerful allies.

A.D. 292 [293]

Before the preparations were finished, Constantius received the intelligence of the tyrant's death, and it was considered as a sure presage of the approaching victory. The servants of Carausius imitated the example of treason which he had given. He was murdered by his first minister Allectus, and the assassin succeeded to his power and to his danger. But he possessed not equal abilities either to exercise the one, or to repel the other. He beheld, with anxious terror, the opposite shores of the continent, already filled with arms, with troops, and with vessels; for Constantius had very prudently divided his forces, that he might likewise divide the attention and resistance of the enemy. The attack was at length made by the principal squadron, which, under the command of the præfect Asclepiodotus, an officer of distinguished merit, had been assembled in the mouth of the Seine. So imperfect in those times was the art of navigation that orators have celebrated the daring courage of the Romans, who ventured to set sail with a side-wind, and on a stormy day. The weather proved favourable to their enterprise. Under the cover of a thick fog, they escaped the fleet of

A.D. 294 [293]. His death

A.D. 296. Recovery of Britain by Constantius

[33] Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 39, 39], Eutropius [ix. 22], and the medals (Pax Aug.) inform us of the temporary reconciliation: though I will not presume (as Dr. Stukely has done, Medallic History of Carausius, p. 86, &c.) to insert the identical articles of the treaty. [See Eckhel, 8, 47. *Carausius et fratres sui* appeared on his coins, as well as other manifestations of the unity of the empire.]

Allectus, which had been stationed off the Isle of Wight to receive them, landed in safety on some part of the western coast, and convinced the Britons that a superiority of naval strength will not always protect their country from a foreign invasion. Asclepiodotus had no sooner disembarked the Imperial troops than he set fire to his ships; and, as the expedition proved fortunate, his heroic conduct was universally admired. The usurper had posted himself near London, to expect the formidable attack of Constantius, who commanded in person the fleet of Boulogne; but the descent of a new enemy required his immediate presence in the West. He performed this long march in so precipitate a manner that he encountered the whole force of the præfect with a small body of harassed and disheartened troops. The engagement was soon terminated by the total defeat and death of Allectus; a single battle, as it has often happened, decided the fate of this great island; and, when Constantius landed on the shores of Kent, he found them covered with obedient subjects. Their acclamations were loud and unanimous; and the virtues of the conqueror may induce us to believe that they sincerely rejoiced in a revolution which, after a separation of ten years, restored Britain to the body of the Roman empire.[34]

Defence of the frontiers

Britain had none but domestic enemies to dread; and, as long as the governors preserved their fidelity, and the troops their discipline, the incursions of the naked savages of Scotland or Ireland could never materially affect the safety of the province. The peace of the continent, and the defence of the principal rivers which bounded the empire, were objects of far greater difficulty and importance. The policy of Diocletian, which inspired the councils of his associates, provided for the public tranquillity, by encouraging a spirit of dissension among the barbarians, and by

Fortifications

strengthening the fortifications of the Roman limit. In the East he fixed a line of camps from Egypt to the Persian dominions, and, for every camp, he instituted an adequate number of stationary troops, commanded by their respective officers, and supplied with every kind of arms, from the new arsenals which he had formed at Antioch, Emesa, and Damascus.[35] Nor was the precaution of the emperor less watchful against the well-known valour of the barbarians of Europe. From the mouth of the Rhine to that of the Danube, the ancient camps, towns, and

[34] With regard to the recovery of Britain, we obtain a few hints from Aurelius Victor and Eutropius. [Chief source: *Incerti Paneg. Constantio.*]

[35] John Malala, in Chron. Antiochen. tom. i. p. 408, 409 [p. 308, ed. Bonn].

citadels, were diligently re-established, and, in the most exposed places, new ones were skilfully constructed; the strictest vigilance was introduced among the garrisons of the frontier, and every expedient was practised that could render the long chain of fortifications firm and impenetrable.[36] A barrier so respectable was seldom violated, and the barbarians often turned against each other their disappointed rage. The Goths, the Vandals, the Gepidæ, the Burgundians, the Alemanni, wasted each other's strength by destructive hostilities: and whosoever vanquished, they vanquished the enemies of Rome. The subjects of Diocletian enjoyed the bloody spectacle, and congratulated each other that the mischiefs of civil war were now experienced only by the barbarians.[37]

Dissensions of the barbarians

Notwithstanding the policy of Diocletian, it was impossible to maintain an equal and undisturbed tranquillity during a reign of twenty years, and along a frontier of many hundred miles. Sometimes the barbarians suspended their domestic animosities, and the vigilance of the garrisons sometimes gave a passage to their strength or dexterity. Whenever the provinces were invaded, Diocletian conducted himself with that calm dignity which he always affected or possessed; reserved his presence for such occasions as were worthy of his interposition, never exposed his person or reputation to any unnecessary danger, ensured his success by every means that prudence could suggest, and displayed, with ostentation, the consequences of his victory. In wars of a more difficult nature, and more doubtful event, he employed the rough valour of Maximian, and that faithful soldier was content to ascribe his own victories to the wise counsels and auspicious influence of his benefactor. But, after the adoption of the two Cæsars, the emperors, themselves retiring to a less laborious scene of action, devolved on their adopted sons the defence of the Danube and of the Rhine. The vigilant Galerius was never reduced to the necessity of vanquishing an army of barbarians on the Roman territory.[38] The brave and active

Conduct of the emperors

Valour of the Cæsars

[36] Zosimus, l. i. p. 3 [error for ii. cap. 34]. That partial historian seems to celebrate the vigilance of Diocletian, with the design of exposing the negligence of Constantine; we may, however, listen to an orator: "Nam quid ego alarum et cohortium castra percenseam, toto Rheni et Istri et Euphratis limite restituta?" Panegyr. Vet. iv. 18.

[37] Ruunt omnes in sanguinem suum populi, quibus non contigit esse Romanis, obstinatæque feritatis pœnas nunc sponte persolvunt. Panegyr. Vet. iii. 16, Mamertinus illustrates the fact by the example of almost all the nations of the world.

[38] He complained, though not with the strictest truth: "Jam fluxisse annos quindecim in quibus, in Illyrico, ad ripam Danubii relegatus cum gentibus barbaris luctaret". Lactant. de M. P. c. 18.

[A.D. 298] Constantius delivered Gaul from a very furious inroad of the Alemanni; and his victories of Langres and Vindonissa appear to have been actions of considerable danger and merit. As he traversed the open country with a feeble guard he was encompassed on a sudden by the superior multitude of the enemy. He retreated with difficulty towards Langres; but, in the general consternation, the citizens refused to open their gates, and the wounded prince was drawn up the wall by the means of a rope. But on the news of his distress the Roman troops hastened from all sides to his relief, and before the evening he had satisfied his honour and revenge by the slaughter of six thousand Alemanni.[39] From the monuments of those times, the obscure traces of several other victories over the barbarians of Sarmatia and Germany might possibly be collected; but the tedious search would not be rewarded either with amusement or with instruction.

Treatment of the barbarians

The conduct which the emperor Probus had adopted in the disposal of the vanquished was imitated by Diocletian and his associates. The captive barbarians, exchanging death for slavery, were distributed among the provincials, and assigned to those districts (in Gaul, the territories of Amiens, Beauvais, Cambray, Treves, Langres, and Troyes, are particularly specified[40]) which had been depopulated by the calamities of war. They were usefully employed as shepherds and husbandmen, but were denied the exercise of arms, except when it was found expedient to enrol them in the military service. Nor did the emperors refuse the property of lands, with a less servile tenure, to such of the barbarians as solicited the protection of Rome. They granted a settlement to several colonies of the Carpi, the Bastarnæ, and the Sarmatians; and, by a dangerous indulgence, permitted them in some measure to retain their national manners and independence.[41] Among the provincials, it was a subject of flattering

[39] In the Greek text of Eusebius, we read six thousand, a number which I have preferred to the sixty thousand of Jerome, Orosius, Eutropius, and his Greek translator Pæanius. [For the distinction of the various campaigns against the German nations in early years of Diocletian's reign see Appendix 22.]

[40] Panegyr. Vet. vii. 21. [The *pagus Chamavorum* near Langres was probably settled at this time.]

[41] There was a settlement of the Sarmatians in the neighbourhood of Treves, which seems to have been deserted by those lazy barbarians: Ausonius speaks of them in his Moselle [5 *sqq.*].

Unde iter ingrediens nemorosa per avia solum,
Et nulla humani spectans vestigia cultus
.
Arvaque Sauromatûm nuper metata colonis.

There was a town of the Carpi in the Lower Mæsia. [In Gaul Constantius had to rebuild the ruined Autun and Trier.]

exultation, that the barbarian, so lately an object of terror, now cultivated their lands, drove their cattle to the neighbouring fair, and contributed by his labour to the public plenty. They congratulated their masters on the powerful accession of subjects and soldiers; but they forgot to observe that multitudes of secret enemies, insolent from favour, or desperate from oppression, were introduced into the heart of the empire.[42]

Wars of Africa and Egypt

While the Cæsars exercised their valour on the banks of the Rhine and Danube, the presence of the emperors was required on the southern confines of the Roman world. From the Nile to Mount Atlas, Africa was in arms. A confederacy of five Moorish [296, 297] nations issued from their deserts to invade the peaceful provinces.[43] Julian had assumed the purple at Carthage,[44] Achilleus at Alexandria;[45] and even the Blemmyes renewed, or rather continued, their incursions into the Upper Egypt. Scarcely any circumstances have been preserved of the exploits of Maximian in the western parts of Africa; but it appears, by the event, that the progress of his arms was rapid and decisive, that he vanquished the fiercest barbarians of Mauritania, and that he removed them from the mountains, whose inaccessible strength had inspired their inhabitants with a lawless confidence, and habituated them to a life of rapine and violence.[46] Diocletian, on his side, opened the campaign in Egypt by the siege of Alexandria, cut off the aqueducts which conveyed the waters of the Nile into every quarter of that immense city,[47] and, rendering his camp impregnable to the sallies of the besieged multitude, he pushed his reiterated attacks with caution and vigour. After a siege of eight months, Alexandria, wasted by the sword and by fire, implored the clemency of the conqueror; but it experienced the

A.D. 296 [295]. Conduct of Diocletian in Egypt

[42] See the rhetorical exultation of Eumenius. Panegyr. vii. 9.

[43] Scaliger (Animadvers. ad Euseb. p. 243) decides, in his usual manner, that the Quinque gentiani, or five African nations, were the five great cities, the Pentapolis of the inoffensive province of Cyrene. [The Quinquegentanei had, along with the Bavares, invaded Numidia in 260 A.D., and were routed by the legatus, Macrinius Decianus, C. I. L. viii. 2615. Again about ten years before Maximian's expedition the same peoples were crushed by Aurelius Litua, the præses of Mauretania Cæsariensis.]

[44] After this defeat, Julian stabbed himself with a dagger, and immediately leaped into the flames. Victor in Epitome [39, 3. John of Antioch, fr. 164.]

[45] [A correction has been made here in the punctuation of the text. See *Introduction*, p. xlii.]

[46] Tu ferocissimos Mauritaniæ populos inaccessis montium jugis et naturali munitione fidentes, expugnasti, recepisti, transtulisti. Panegyr. Vet. vi. 8 [Incert. Pan. Max. et Const. Aug. 8. Maximian was still in Africa on 10 March 298. Frag. Vat. 41.]

[47] See the description of Alexandria in Hirtius de Bel. Alexandrin. c. 5.

full extent of his severity. Many thousands of the citizens perished in a promiscuous slaughter, and there were few obnoxious persons in Egypt who escaped a sentence either of death or at least of exile.[48] The fate of Busiris and of Coptos was still more melancholy than that of Alexandria; those proud cities, the former distinguished by its antiquity, the latter enriched by the passage of the Indian trade, were utterly destroyed by the arms and by the severe order of Diocletian.[49] The character of the Egyptian nation, insensible to kindness, but extremely susceptible of fear, could alone justify this excessive rigour. The seditions of Alexandria had often affected the tranquillity and subsistence of Rome itself. Since the usurpation of Firmus, the province of Upper Egypt, incessantly relapsing into rebellion, had embraced the alliance of the savages of Æthiopia. The number of the Blemmyes, scattered between the Island of Meroe and the Red Sea, was very inconsiderable, their disposition was unwarlike, their weapons rude and inoffensive.[50] Yet in the public disorders these barbarians, whom antiquity, shocked with the deformity of their figure, had almost excluded from the human species, presumed to rank themselves among the enemies of Rome.[51] Such had been the unworthy allies of the Egyptians; and, while the attention of the state was engaged in more serious wars, their vexatious inroads might again harass the repose of the province. With a view of opposing to the Blemmyes a suitable adversary, Diocletian persuaded the Nobatæ, or people of Nubia, to remove from their ancient habitations in the deserts of Libya, and resigned to them an extensive but unprofitable territory, above Syene and the cataracts of the Nile, with the stipulation that they should ever respect and guard the frontier of the empire. The treaty long subsisted; and till the establishment of Chris-

[48] Eutrop. ix. 24. Orosius, vii. 25. John Malala in Chron. Antioch. p. 409, 410 [p. 309, ed. Bonn]. Yet Eumenius assures us that Egypt was pacified by the clemency of Diocletian. [Achilleus seems to have been preceded by another tyrant, L. Domitius Domitianus, whose reign was so short that he is not mentioned by any writer, and his existence is only known by some coins, which puzzle numismatists. It has been conjectured, but not proved, that he and Achilleus were one and the same person. Compare Eckhel, 8, 41; Cohen, 5, 549, also Schiller, ii. 138.]

[49] Eusebius (in Chron.) places their destruction several years sooner, and at a time when Egypt itself was in a state of rebellion against the Romans. [Diocletian left Nicomedia at end of March, 295; seems to have begun siege of Alexandria in July, for it lasted eight months, and a rescript is dated from it on 31 March, 296. See Mommsen, *loc. cit.*]

[50] Strabo, l. xvii. p. 1, 172 [*leg.* 819]. Pomponius Mela. l. i. c. 4. His words are curious, "Intra, si credere libet, vix homines magisque semiferi; Ægipanes, et *Blemmyes*, et Satyri".

[51] Ausus sese inserere fortunæ et provocare arma Romana.

tianity introduced stricter notions of religious worship, it was annually ratified by a solemn sacrifice in the isle of Elephantine, in which the Romans, as well as the barbarians, adored the same visible or invisible powers of the universe.[52]

At the same time that Diocletian chastised the past crimes of the Egyptians, he provided for their future safety and happiness by many wise regulations, which were confirmed and enforced under the succeeding reigns.[53] One very remarkable edict, which he published, instead of being condemned as the effect of jealous tyranny deserves to be applauded as an act of prudence and humanity. He caused a diligent inquiry to be made "for all the ancient books which treated of the admirable art of making gold and silver, and without pity committed them to the flames; apprehensive, as we are assured, lest the opulence of the Egyptians should inspire them with confidence to rebel against the empire".[54] But, if Diocletian had been convinced of the reality of that valuable art, far from extinguishing the memory, he would have converted the operation of it to the benefit of the public revenue. It is much more likely that his good sense discovered to him the folly of such magnificent pretensions, and that he was desirous of preserving the reason and fortunes of his subjects from the mischievous pursuit. It may be remarked that these ancient books, so liberally ascribed to Pythagoras, to Solomon, or to Hermes, were the pious frauds of more recent adepts. The Greeks were inattentive either to the use or to the abuse of chymistry. In that immense register where Pliny has deposited the discoveries, the arts, and the errors of mankind, there is not the least mention of the transmutation of metals; and the persecution of Diocletian is the first authentic event in the history of alchymy. The conquest of Egypt by the Arabs diffused that vain science over the globe. Congenial to the avarice of the human heart, it was studied in China as in Europe, with equal eagerness, and with equal success. The darkness of the middle ages ensured a favourable reception to every tale of wonder, and the revival of learning gave new vigour to hope, and suggested more specious arts of deception. Philosophy, with the aid of experience, has at

He suppresses books of alchemy

Novelty and progress of that art

[52] See Procopius de Bell. Persic. l. i. c. 19.

[53] He fixed the public allowance of corn for the people of Alexandria, at two millions of *medimni;* about four hundred thousand quarters. Chron. Paschal. p. 276. Procop. Hist. Arcan. c. 26.

[54] John Antioch. in Excerp. Valesian. p. 834 [F.H.G. iv. p. 601]. Suidas in Diocletian.

length banished the study of alchymy; and the present age, however desirous of riches, is content to seek them by the humbler means of commerce and industry.[55]

The Persian war

The reduction of Egypt was immediately followed by the Persian war. It was reserved for the reign of Diocletian to vanquish that powerful nation, and to extort a confession from the successors of Artaxerxes, of the superior majesty of the Roman empire.

Tiridates the Armenian

We have observed, under the reign of Valerian, that Armenia was subdued by the perfidy and the arms of the Persians, and that, after the assassination of Chosroes, his son Tiridates, the infant heir of the monarchy, was saved by the fidelity of his friends, and educated under the protection of the emperors. Tiridates derived from his exile such advantages as he could never have attained on the throne of Armenia; the early knowledge of adversity, of mankind, and of the Roman discipline. He signalized his youth by deeds of valour, and displayed a matchless dexterity, as well as strength, in every martial exercise, and even in the less honourable contests of the Olympian games.[56] Those qualities were more nobly exerted in the defence

A.D 282

of his benefactor Licinius.[57] That officer, in the sedition which occasioned the death of Probus, was exposed to the most imminent danger, and the enraged soldiers were forcing their way into his tent, when they were checked by the single arm of the Armenian prince. The gratitude of Tiridates contributed soon afterwards to his restoration. Licinius was in every station the friend and companion of Galerius, and the merit of Galerius, long before he was raised to the dignity of Cæsar, had been known and esteemed by Diocletian. In the third year of that emperor's reign, Tiridates was invested with the kingdom of Armenia. The justice of the measure was not less evident than its expediency. It was time to rescue from the usurpation of the Persian monarch an important territory, which, since the reign of Nero,

[55] See a short history and confutation of Alchymy, in the works of that philosophical compiler, La Mothe le Vayer, tom. i. p. 327-353.

[56] See the education and strength of Tiridates in the Armenian history of Moses of Chorene, l. ii. c. 76. He could seize two wild bulls by the horns, and break them off with his hands.

[57] If we give credit to the younger Victor [Epit. 41], who supposes that, in the year 323, Licinius was only sixty years of age, he could scarcely be the same person as the patron of Tiridates; but we know from much better authority (Euseb. Hist. Ecclesiast. l. x. c. 8) that Licinius was at that time in the last period of old age: sixteen years before, he is represented with grey hairs, and as the contemporary of Galerius. See Lactant. c. 32. Licinius was probably born about the year 250.

had been always granted under the protection of the empire to a younger branch of the house of Arsaces.[58]

A D. 286. His restoration to the throne of Armenia

When Tiridates appeared on the frontiers of Armenia, he was received with an unfeigned transport of joy and loyalty. During twenty-six years, the country had experienced the real and imaginary hardships of a foreign yoke. The Persian monarchs had adorned their new conquest with magnificent buildings; but those monuments had been erected at the expense of the people, and were abhorred as badges of slavery. The apprehension of a revolt had inspired the most rigorous precautions: oppression had been aggravated by insult, and the consciousness of the public hatred had been productive of every measure that could render it still more implacable. We have already remarked the intolerant spirit of the Magian religion. The statues of the deified kings of Armenia, and the sacred images of the sun and moon, were broke in pieces by the zeal of the conqueror; and the perpetual fire of Ormuzd was kindled and preserved upon an altar erected on the summit of Mount Bagavan.[59] It was natural that a people exasperated by so many injuries should arm with zeal in the cause of their independence, their religion, and their hereditary sovereign. The torrent bore down every obstacle, and the Persian garrison retreated before its fury. The nobles of Armenia flew to the standard of Tiridates, all alleging their past merit, offering their future service, and soliciting from the new king those honours and rewards from which they had been excluded with disdain under the foreign government.[60] The command of the army was bestowed on Artavasdes, whose father had saved the infancy of Tiridates, and whose family had been massacred for that generous action. The brother of Artavasdes obtained the government of a province. One of the first military dignities was conferred on the satrap Otas, a man of singular temperance and fortitude, who presented to the king his sister[61] and a considerable treasure, both of which, in a sequestered

State of the country

Revolt of the people and nobles

[58] See the sixty-second and sixty-third books of Dion Cassius [cp. lxiii. 5].

[59] Moses of Chorene, Hist. Armen. l. ii. c. 74. The statues had been erected by Valarsaces, who reigned in Armenia about 130 years before Christ, and was the first king of the family of Arsaces (see Moses, Hist. Armen. l. ii. 2, 3). The deification of the Arsacides is mentioned by Justin (xli. 5) and by Ammianus Marcellinus (xxiii. 6).

[60] The Armenian nobility was numerous and powerful. Moses mentions many families which were distinguished under the reign of Valarsaces (l. ii. 7) and which still subsisted in his own time, about the middle of the fifth century. See the preface of his Editors.

[61] She was named Chosroiduchta, and had not the *os patulum* like other women. (Hist. Armen. l. ii. c. 79.) I do not understand the expression.

Story of Mamgo

fortress, Otas had preserved from violation. Among the Armenian nobles appeared an ally, whose fortunes are too remarkable to pass unnoticed. His name was Mamgo, his origin was Scythian, and the horde which acknowledged his authority had encamped a very few years before on the skirts of the Chinese empire,[62] which at that time extended as far as the neighbourhood of Sogdiana.[63] Having incurred the displeasure of his master, Mamgo, with his followers, retired to the banks of the Oxus, and implored the protection of Sapor. The emperor of China claimed the fugitive, and alleged the rights of sovereignty. The Persian monarch pleaded the laws of hospitality, and with some difficulty avoided a war, by the promise that he would banish Mamgo to the uttermost parts of the West; a punishment, as he described it, not less dreadful than death itself. Armenia was chosen for the place of exile, and a large district was assigned to the Scythian horde, on which they might feed their flocks and herds, and remove their encampment from one place to another according to the different seasons of the year. They were employed to repel the invasion of Tiridates; but their leader, after weighing the obligations and injuries which he had received from the Persian monarch, resolved to abandon his party. The Armenian prince, who was well acquainted with the merit as well as power of Mamgo, treated him with distinguished respect; and, by admitting him into his confidence, acquired a brave and faithful servant, who contributed very effectually to his restoration.[64]

The Persians recover Armenia

For a while, fortune appeared to favour the enterprising valour of Tiridates. He not only expelled the enemies of his family and country from the whole extent of Armenia, but in the prosecution of his revenge he carried his arms, or at least his incursions, into the heart of Assyria. The historian who has preserved the name of Tiridates from oblivion celebrates, with a degree of national enthusiasm, his personal prowess; and, in the

[62] In the Armenian history (l. ii. 78) as well as in the Geography (p. 367) China is called Zenia, or Zenastan. It is characterized by the production of silk, by the opulence of the natives, and by their love of peace, above all the other nations of the earth.

[63] Vou-ti, the first emperor of the seventh dynasty, who then reigned in China, had political transactions with Fergana, a province of Sogdiana, and is said to have received a Roman embassy. (Histoire des Huns, tom. i. p. 38.) In those ages the Chinese kept a garrison at Kashgar, and one of their generals, about the time of Trajan, marched as far as the Caspian Sea. With regard to the intercourse between China and the Western countries, a curious memoir of M. de Guignes may be consulted in the Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xxxii. p. 355.

[64] See Hist. Armen. l. ii. c. 81.

true spirit of eastern romance, describes the giants and the elephants that fell beneath his invincible arm. It is from other information that we discover the distracted state of the Persian monarchy, to which the king of Armenia was indebted for some part of his advantages. The throne was disputed by the ambition of contending brothers; and Hormuz, after exerting without success the strength of his own party, had recourse to the dangerous assistance of the barbarians who inhabited the banks of the Caspian Sea.[65] The civil war was, however, soon terminated, either by a victory or by a reconciliation; and Narses, who was universally acknowledged as King of Persia, directed his whole force against the foreign enemy. The contest then became too unequal; nor was the valour of the hero able to withstand the power of the monarch. Tiridates, a second time expelled from the throne of Armenia, once more took refuge in the court of the emperors. Narses soon re-established his authority over the revolted province; and, loudly complaining of the protection afforded by the Romans to rebels and fugitives, aspired to the conquest of the East.[66]

War between the Persians and the Romans, A.D 296

Neither prudence nor honour could permit the emperors to forsake the cause of the Armenian king, and it was resolved to exert the force of the empire in the Persian war. Diocletian, with the calm dignity which he constantly assumed, fixed his own station in the city of Antioch, from whence he prepared and directed the military operations.[67] The conduct of the legions was intrusted to the intrepid valour of Galerius, who, for that important purpose, was removed from the banks of the Danube to those of the Euphrates. The armies soon encountered each other in the plains of Mesopotamia, and two battles were fought with various and doubtful success: but the third engagement was of a more decisive nature; and the Roman army

Defeat of Galerius

[65] Ipsos Persas ipsumque Regem ascitis Sacis, et Rufiis, et Gellis, petit frater Ormies. P anegyric. Vet. iii 1 [*leg.* 17; Genethl. Max. p. 114, ed. Bährens]. The Sacæ were a nation of wandering Scythians, who encamped towards the sources of the Oxus and the Jaxartes. The Gelli were the inhabitants of Ghilan along the Caspian Sea, and who so long, under the name of Dilemites, infested the Persian Monarchy. See d'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale.

[66] Moses of Chorene takes no notice of this second revolution, which I have been obliged to collect from a passage of Ammianus Marcellinus (l. xxiii. 5). Lactantius speaks of the ambition of Narses: "Concitatus domesticis exemplis avi sui Saporis ad occupandum orientem magnis copiis inhiabat". De Mort. Persecut. c. 9. [Narses, son of Varahrâm II., succeeded after Sept. 13, 293; Nöldeke, 416.]

[67] We may readily believe that Lactantius ascribes to cowardice the conduct of Diocletian. Julian, in his oration, says that he remained with all the forces of the empire; a very hyperbolical expression. [In the early part of the year, at least till April, Diocletian was in Egypt.]

received a total overthrow, which is attributed to the rashness of Galerius, who, with an inconsiderable body of troops, attacked the innumerable host of the Persians.[68] But the consideration of the country that was the scene of action may suggest another reason for his defeat. The same ground, on which Galerius was vanquished, had been rendered memorable by the death of Crassus and the slaughter of ten legions. It was a plain of more than sixty miles, which extended from the hills of Carrhæ to the Euphrates; a smooth and barren surface of sandy desert, without a hillock, without a tree, and without a spring of fresh water.[69] The steady infantry of the Romans, fainting with heat and thirst, could neither hope for victory, if they preserved their ranks, nor break their ranks without exposing themselves to the most imminent danger. In this situation, they were gradually encompassed by the superior numbers, harassed by the rapid evolutions, and destroyed by the arrows, of the barbarian cavalry. The king of Armenia had signalized his valour in the battle, and acquired personal glory by the public misfortune. He was pursued as far as the Euphrates; his horse was wounded, and it appeared impossible for him to escape the victorious enemy. In this extremity, Tiridates embraced the only refuge which he saw before him: he dismounted and plunged into the stream. His armour was heavy, the river very deep, and in those parts at least half a mile in breadth;[70] yet such was his strength and dexterity that he reached in safety the opposite bank.[71] With regard to the Roman general, we are ignorant of the circumstances of his escape; but, when he returned to Antioch, Diocletian received him, not with the tenderness of a friend and colleague, but with the indignation of an offended sovereign. The haughtiest of men, clothed in his purple, but humbled by the sense of his fault and misfortune, was obliged to follow the emperor's chariot above a mile on foot, and to exhibit before the whole court the spectacle of his disgrace.[72]

His reception by Diocletian

[68] Our five abbreviators, Eutropius, Festus, the two Victors, and Orosius, all relate the last and great battle; but Orosius [vii. 25] is the only one who speaks of the two former.

[69] The nature of the country is finely described by Plutarch, in the life of Crassus, and by Xenophon, in the first book of the Anabasis. [The mistake of Galerius was similar to that of Crassus.]

[70] See Foster's Dissertation, in the second volume of the translation of the Anabasis by Spelman; which I will venture to recommend as one of the best versions extant.

[71] Hist. Armen. l. ii. c. 76. I have transferred this exploit of Tiridates from an imaginary defeat to the real one of Galerius.

[72] Ammian. Marcellin. l. xiv. [11]. The mile, in the hands of Eutropius (ix. 24), of Festus (c. 25), and of Orosius (vii. 25), easily increased to *several* miles.

As soon as Diocletian had indulged his private resentment, and asserted the majesty of supreme power, he yielded to the submissive entreaties of the Cæsar, and permitted him to retrieve his own honour as well as that of the Roman arms. In the room of the unwarlike troops of Asia, which had most probably served in the first expedition, a second army was drawn from the veterans and new levies of the Illyrian frontier, and a considerable body of Gothic auxiliaries were taken into the Imperial pay.[73] At the head of a chosen army of twenty-five thousand men, Galerius again passed the Euphrates; but, instead of exposing his legions in the open plains of Mesopotamia, he advanced through the mountains of Armenia, where he found the inhabitants devoted to his cause, and the country as favourable to the operations of infantry as it was inconvenient for the motions of cavalry.[74] Adversity had confirmed the Roman discipline, whilst the barbarians, elated by success, were become so negligent and remiss, that, in the moment when they least expected it, they were surprised by the active conduct of Galerius, who, attended only by two horsemen, had, with his own eyes, secretly examined the state and position of their camp. A surprise, especially in the night-time, was for the most part fatal to a Persian army. "Their horses were tied, and generally shackled, to prevent their running away; and, if an alarm happened, a Persian had his housing to fix, his horse to bridle, and his corslet to put on, before he could mount."[75] On this occasion, the impetuous attack of Galerius spread disorder and dismay over the camp of the barbarians. A slight resistance was followed by a dreadful carnage, and, in the general confusion, the wounded monarch (for Narses commanded his armies in person) fled towards the deserts of Media. His sumptuous tents, and those of his satraps, afforded an immense booty to the conqueror; and an incident is mentioned, which proves the rustic but martial ignorance of the legions in the elegant superfluities of life. A bag of shining leather, filled with pearls, fell into the hands of a private soldier; he carefully preserved the bag, but he threw away its contents, judging that whatever was of no use could not possibly be of any value.[76] The principal loss of Narses was

Second campaign of Galerius, A.D. 297

His victory

and behaviour to his royal captives

[73] Aurelius Victor. Jornandes de rebus Geticis, c. 21.

[74] Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 39] says, "Per Armeniam in hostes contendit, quæ ferme sola, seu facilior vincendi via est". He followed the conduct of Trajan, and the idea of Julius Cæsar.

[75] Xenophon's Anabasis, l. iii. [c. 4]. For that reason, the Persian cavalry encamped sixty stadia from the enemy.

[76] The story is told by Ammianus, l. xxii. [4, 8]. Instead of *saccum* some read *scutum* [*sacculum* is the true reading, the Mss. having *saccutum* and *saeculum*].

of a much more affecting nature. Several of his wives, his sisters, and children, who had attended the army, were made captives in the defeat. But, though the character of Galerius had in general very little affinity with that of Alexander, he imitated, after his victory, the amiable behaviour of the Macedonian towards the family of Darius. The wives and children of Narses were protected from violence and rapine, conveyed to a place of safety, and treated with every mark of respect and tenderness that was due, from a generous enemy, to their age, their sex, and their royal dignity.[77]

Negotiation for peace

While the East anxiously expected the decision of this great contest, the emperor Diocletian, having assembled in Syria a strong army of observation, displayed from a distance the resources of the Roman power, and reserved himself for any future emergency of the war. On the intelligence of the victory, he condescended to advance towards the frontier, with a view of moderating, by his presence and counsels, the pride of Galerius. The interview of the Roman princes at Nisibis was accompanied with every expression of respect on one side, and of esteem on the other. It was in that city that they soon afterwards gave audience to the ambassador of the Great King.[78] The power, or at least the spirit, of Narses, had been broken by his last defeat; and he considered an immediate peace as the only means that could stop the progress of the Roman arms. He dispatched Apharban, a servant who possessed his favour and confidence, with a commission to negotiate a treaty, or rather to receive whatever conditions the conqueror should impose. Apharban opened the conference by expressing his master's gratitude for the generous treatment of his family, and by soliciting the liberty of those illustrious captives. He celebrated the valour of Galerius, without degrading the reputation of Narses, and thought it no dishonour to confess the superiority of the victorious Cæsar over a monarch who had surpassed in glory all the princes of his race. Notwithstanding the justice of the Persian cause, he was empowered to submit the present differences to the decision of the emperors themselves; convinced as he was,

Speech of the Persian ambassador

[77] The Persians confessed the Roman superiority in morals as well as in arms. Eutrop. ix. 24. But this respect and gratitude of enemies is very seldom to be found in their own accounts.

[78] The account of the negotiation is taken from the fragments of Peter the Patrician, in the Excerpta Legationum, published in the Byzantine Collection [also in vol. iv. of Müller's Fragm. Hist. Græc.]. Peter lived under Justinian; but it is very evident, by the nature of his materials, that they are drawn from the most authentic and respectable writers.

that, in the midst of prosperity, they would not be unmindful of the vicissitudes of fortune. Apharban concluded his discourse in the style of Eastern allegory, by observing that the Roman and Persian monarchies were the two eyes of the world, which would remain imperfect and mutilated, if either of them should be put out.

Answer of Galerius

"It well becomes the Persians," replied Galerius, with a transport of fury, which seemed to convulse his whole frame, "it well becomes the Persians to expatiate on the vicissitudes of fortune and calmly to read us lectures on the virtues of moderation. Let them remember their own *moderation* towards the unhappy Valerian. They vanquished him by fraud, they treated him with indignity. They detained him till the last moment of his life in shameful captivity, and, after his death, they exposed his body to perpetual ignominy." Softening, however, his tone, Galerius insinuated to the ambassador that it had never been the practice of the Romans to trample on a prostrate enemy; and that on this occasion they should consult their own dignity rather than the Persian merit. He dismissed Apharban with a hope that Narses would soon be informed on what conditions he might obtain, from the clemency of the emperors, a lasting peace, and the restoration of his wives and children. In this conference we may discover the fierce passions of Galerius, as well as his deference to the superior wisdom and authority of Diocletian. The ambition of the former grasped at the conquest of the East and had proposed to reduce Persia into the state of a province. The prudence of the latter, who adhered to the moderate policy of Augustus and the Antonines, embraced the favourable opportunity of terminating a successful war by an honourable and advantageous peace.[79]

Moderation of Diocletian

Conclusion

In pursuance of their promise, the emperors soon afterwards appointed Sicorius Probus, one of their secretaries, to acquaint the Persian court with their final resolution. As the minister of peace, he was received with every mark of politeness and friendship; but, under the pretence of allowing him the necessary repose after so long a journey, the audience of Probus was deferred from day to day; and he attended the slow motions of the king, till at length he was admitted to his presence, near the river Asprudus in Media. The secret motive of Narses, in this delay, had been to collect such a military force as might enable

[79] Adeo Victor (says Aurelius) ut ni Valerius, cujus nutu omnia gerebantur, abnuisset, Romani fasces in provinciam novam ferrentur. Verum pars terrarum tamen nobis utilior quæsita.

him, though sincerely desirous of peace, to negotiate with the greater weight and dignity. Three persons only assisted at this important conference; the minister Apharban, the præfect of the guards, and an officer who had commanded on the Armenian frontier.[80] The first condition, proposed by the ambassador, is not at present of a very intelligible nature; that the city of Nisibis might be established for the place of mutual exchange, or, as we should formerly have termed it, for the staple of trade between the two empires. There is no difficulty in conceiving the intention of the Roman princes to improve their revenue by some restraints upon commerce; but, as Nisibis was situated within their own dominions, and as they were masters both of the imports and exports, it should seem that such restraints were the objects of an internal law rather than of a foreign treaty. To render them more effectual, some stipulations were probably required on the side of the king of Persia, which appeared so very repugnant either to his interest or to his dignity, that Narses could not be persuaded to subscribe them. As this was the only article to which he refused his consent, it was no longer insisted on; and the emperors either suffered the trade to flow in its natural channels, or contented themselves with such restrictions as it depended on their own authority to establish.

and articles of the treaty

As soon as this difficulty was removed, a solemn peace was concluded and ratified between the two nations. The conditions of a treaty so glorious to the empire, and so necessary to Persia, may deserve a more peculiar attention, as the history of Rome presents very few transactions of a similar nature; most of her wars having either been terminated by absolute conquest, or waged against barbarians ignorant of the use of letters. I. The Aboras, or, as it is called by Xenophon, the Araxes, was fixed as the boundary between the two monarchies.[81] That river which rose near the Tigris, was increased, a few miles below Nisibis, by the little stream of the Mygdonius, passed under the walls of Singara, and fell into the Euphrates at Circesium, a frontier town, which, by the care of Diocletian, was very strongly fortified.[82] Meso-

The Aboras fixed as the limit between the empires

[80] He had been governor of Sumium. (Pet. Patricius in Excerpt. Legat. p. 30 [F.H.G. iv. p. 189].) This province seems to be mentioned by Moses of Chorene (Geograph. p. 360), and lay to the east of Mount Ararat.

[81] By an error of the geographer Ptolemy, the position of Singara is removed from the Aboras to the Tigris, which may have produced the mistake of Peter in assigning the latter river for the boundary, instead of the former. The line of the Roman frontier traversed, but never followed, the course of the Tigris. [The Aboras rises a long way to the west of the Tigris; and Nisibis is situated on the Mygdonius.]

[82] Procopius de Ædificiis, l. ii. c.

potamia, the object of so many wars, was ceded to the empire; and the Persians, by this treaty, renounced all pretensions to that great province. II. They relinquished to the Romans five provinces beyond the Tigris.[83] Their situation formed a very useful barrier, and their natural strength was soon improved by art and military skill. Four of these, to the north of the river, were districts of obscure fame and inconsiderable extent: Intiline, Zabdicene, Arzanene, and Moxoene; but, on the east of the Tigris, the empire acquired the large and mountainous territory of Carduene, the ancient seat of the Carduchians, who preserved for many ages their manly freedom in the heart of the despotic monarchies of Asia. The ten thousand Greeks traversed their country, after a painful march, or rather engagement, of seven days; and it is confessed by their leader, in his incomparable relation of the retreat, that they suffered more from the arrows of the Carduchians than from the power of the Great King.[84] Their posterity, the Curds, with very little alteration either of name or manners, acknowledged the nominal sovereignty of the Turkish sultan. III. It is almost needless to observe that Tiridates, the faithful ally of Rome, was restored to the throne of his fathers, and that the rights of the Imperial supremacy were fully asserted and secured. The limits of Armenia were extended as far as the fortress of Sintha in Media, and this increase of dominion was not so much an act of liberality as of justice. Of the provinces already mentioned beyond the Tigris, the four first had been dismembered by the Parthians from the crown of Armenia;[85] and, when the Romans acquired the possession of them, they stipulated, at the expense of the usurpers, an ample compensation, which invested their ally with the extensive and

Cession of five provinces beyond the Tigris

Armenia

[83] Three of the provinces, Zabdicene, Arzanene, and Carduene [Corduene], are allowed on all sides. But instead of the other two, Peter (in Excerpt. Leg. p. 30 [ib.]) inserts Rehimene and Sophene. I have preferred Ammianus (l. xxv. 7), because it might be proved, that Sophene was never in the hand of the Persians, either before the reign of Diocletian, or after that of Jovian. For want of correct maps, like those of M. d'Anville, almost all the moderns, with Tillemont and Valesius at their head, have imagined that it was in respect to Persia, and not to Rome, that the five provinces were situate beyond the Tigris. [Intilene and Moxoene are the same. Gibbon's statements are not correct. Peter gives Intêlene and Sophene; Ammianus, Moxoene and Rehimene. Thus the question is between Rehimene and Sophene.]

[84] Xenophon's Anabasis, l. iv. [3]. Their bows were three cubits in length, their arrows two; they rolled down stones that were each a waggon load. The Greeks found a great many villages in that rude country.

[85] According to Eutropius (vi. 9, as the text is represented by the best Mss.) the city of Tigranocerta was in Arzanene. The names and situation of the other three may be faintly traced.

fertile country of Atropatene. Its principal city, in the same situation perhaps as the modern Tauris, was frequently honoured with the residence of Tiridates; and, as it sometimes bore the name of Ecbatana, he imitated, in the buildings and fortifications, the splendid capital of the Medes.[86] IV. The country of Iberia was barren, its inhabitants rude and savage. But they were accustomed to the use of arms, and they separated from the empire barbarians much fiercer and more formidable than themselves. The narrow defiles of Mount Caucasus were in their hands, and it was in their choice either to admit or to exclude the wandering tribes of Sarmatia, whenever a rapacious spirit urged them to penetrate into the richer climates of the South.[87] The nomination of the kings of Iberia, which was resigned by the Persian monarch to the emperors, contributed to the strength and security of the Roman power in Asia.[88] The East enjoyed a profound tranquillity during forty years; and the treaty between the rival monarchies was strictly observed till the death of Tiridates; when a new generation, animated with different views and different passions, succeeded to the government of the world; and the grandson of Narses undertook a long and memorable war against the princes of the house of Constantine.

Iberia

Triumph of Diocletian; and Maximian, A.D. 303, Nov. 20. [Triumph 302, Vicennalia 303, Nov. 20]

The arduous work of rescuing the distressed empire from tyrants and barbarians had now been completely achieved by a succession of Illyrian peasants. As soon as Diocletian entered into the twentieth year of his reign, he celebrated that memorable æra, as well as the success of his arms, by the pomp of a Roman triumph.[89] Maximian, the equal partner of his power, was his only companion in the glory of that day. The two Cæsars had fought and conquered, but the merit of their exploits was ascribed, according to the rigour of ancient maxims, to the auspicious influence of their fathers and emperors.[90] The triumph of Diocletian and Maximian was less magnificent, perhaps, than those of Aurelian and Probus, but it was dignified

[86] Compare Herodotus, l. i. c. 97, with Moses Chorenens. Hist. Armen. l. ii. c. 84, and the map of Armenia given by his editors.

[87] Hiberi, locorum potentes, Caspiâ viâ Sarmatum in Armenios raptim effundunt. Tacit. Annal. vi. 33. See Strabon. Geograph. l. xi. p. 764 [500].

[88] Peter Patricius (in Excerpt. Leg. p. 30 [F.H.G. iv. p. 189]) is the only writer who mentions the Iberian article of the treaty.

[89] Eusebius in Chron. Pagi ad annum. Till the discovery of the treatise de Mortibus Persecutorum, it was not certain that the triumph and the Vicennalia were celebrated at the same time. [Date still uncertain. The triumph, acc. to Clinton, was in the year before the Vicennalia, but Preuss agrees with Gibbon.]

[90] At the time of the Vicennalia, Galerius seems to have kept his station on the Danube. See Lactant. de M. P. c. 38.

by several circumstances of superior fame and good fortune. Africa and Britain, the Rhine, the Danube, and the Nile, furnished their respective trophies; but the most distinguished ornament was of a more singular nature, a Persian victory followed by an important conquest.[91] The representations of rivers, mountains, and provinces were carried before the Imperial car. The images of the captive wives, the sisters, and the children of the Great King afforded a new and grateful spectacle to the vanity of the people.[92] In the eyes of posterity this triumph is remarkable by a distinction of a less honourable kind. It was the last that Rome ever beheld. Soon after this period, the emperors ceased to vanquish, and Rome ceased to be the capital of the empire.

Long absence of the emperors from Rome

The spot on which Rome was founded had been consecrated by ancient ceremonies and imaginary miracles. The presence of some god, or the memory of some hero, seemed to animate every part of the city, and the empire of the world had been promised to the Capitol.[93] The native Romans felt and confessed the power of this agreeable illusion. It was derived from their ancestors, had grown up with their earliest habits of life, and was protected, in some measure, by the opinion of political utility. The form and the seat of government were intimately blended together, nor was it esteemed possible to transport the one without destroying the other.[94] But the sovereignty of the capital was gradually annihilated in the extent of conquest; the provinces rose to the same level, and the vanquished nations acquired the name and privileges, without imbibing the partial affections, of Romans. During a long period, however, the remains of the ancient constitution, and the influence of custom, preserved the dignity of Rome. The emperors, though perhaps of African or Illyrian extraction, respected their adopted country,

[91] [The remarkable edict of 301 A.D., in which Diocletian attempted to fix maximum prices (see Append. 23), records the number of victories of which each emperor could boast. Diocletian counted six German, four Sarmatian victories; Maximian, five German and four Sarmatian; both Cæsars, two German and two Sarmatian. To all four fell equally, two Persian, one Britannic, one Caspian, one Armenian, one Median, and one Adiabenic victory.]

[92] Eutropius (ix. 27) mentions them as a part of the triumph. As the *persons* had been restored to Narses, nothing more than their *images* could be exhibited.

[93] Livy gives us a speech of Camillus on that subject (v. 51-55 [54]), full of eloquence and sensibility, in opposition to a design of removing the seat of government from Rome to the neighbouring city of Veii.

[94] Julius Cæsar was reproached with the intention of removing the empire to Ilium or Alexandria. See Sueton. in Cæsar. c. 79. According to the ingenious conjecture of Le Fèvre and Dacier, the third ode of the third book of Horace was intended to divert Augustus from the execution of a similar design.

as the seat of their power, and the centre of their extensive dominions. The emergencies of war very frequently required their presence on the frontiers; but Diocletian and Maximian were the first Roman princes who fixed, in time of peace, their ordinary residence in the provinces; and their conduct, however it might be suggested by private motives, was justified by very specious considerations of policy. The court of the Emperor of the West was, for the most part, established at Milan, whose situation, at the foot of the Alps, appeared far more convenient than that of Rome, for the important purpose of watching the motions of the barbarians of Germany. Milan soon assumed the splendour of an Imperial city. The houses are described as numerous and well built; the manners of the people as polished and liberal. A circus, a theatre, a mint, a palace, baths, which bore the name of their founder Maximian; porticoes adorned with statues, and a double circumference of walls, contributed to the beauty of the new capital; nor did it seem oppressed even by the proximity of Rome.[95] To rival the majesty of Rome was the ambition likewise of Diocletian, who employed his leisure, and the wealth of the East, in the embellishment of Nicomedia, a city placed on the verge of Europe and Asia, almost at an equal distance between the Danube and the Euphrates. By the taste of the monarch, and at the expense of the people, Nicomedia acquired, in the space of a few years, a degree of magnificence which might appear to have required the labour of ages, and became inferior only to Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, in extent or populousness.[96] The life of Diocletian and Maximian was a life of action, and a considerable portion of it was spent in camps, or in their long and frequent marches; but, whenever the public business allowed them any relaxation, they seem to have retired with pleasure to their favourite

Their residence at Milan

and Nicomedia

[95] See Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 39], who likewise mentions the buildings erected by Maximian at Carthage, probably during the Moorish war. We shall insert some verses of Ausonius de Clar. urb. v.

Et Mediolani mira omnia: copia rerum:
Innumeræ cultæque domus; fecunda virorum
Ingenia, et mores læti; tum duplice muro
Amplificata loci species; populique voluptas
Circus; et inclusi moles cuneata Theatri;
Templa, Palatinæque arces, opulensque Moneta,
Et regio *Herculei* celebris sub honore lavacri.
Cunctaque marmoreis ornata Peristyla signis;
Mœniaque in valli formam circumdata labro,
Omnia quæ magnis operum velut æmula formis
Excellunt: nec juncta premit vicinia Romæ.

[96] Lactant. de M. P. c. 7. Libanius Orat. viii. p. 203.

residences of Nicomedia and Milan. Till Diocletian, in the twentieth year of his reign, celebrated his Roman triumph, it is extremely doubtful whether he ever visited the ancient capital of the empire. Even on that memorable occasion his stay did not exceed two months. Disgusted with the licentious familiarity of the people, he quitted Rome with precipitation thirteen days before it was expected that he should have appeared in the senate, invested with the ensigns of the consular dignity.[97]

Debasement of Rome and of the senate

The dislike expressed by Diocletian towards Rome and Roman freedom was not the effect of momentary caprice, but the result of the most artful policy. That crafty prince had framed a new system of Imperial government, which was afterwards completed by the family of Constantine, and, as the image of the old constitution was religiously preserved in the senate, he resolved to deprive that order of its small remains of power and consideration. We may recollect, about eight years before the elevation of Diocletian, the transient greatness, and the ambitious hopes, of the Roman senate. As long as that enthusiasm prevailed, many of the nobles imprudently displayed their zeal in the cause of freedom; and, after the successors of Probus had withdrawn their countenance from the republican party, the senators were unable to disguise their impotent resentment. As the sovereign of Italy, Maximian was intrusted with the care of extinguishing this troublesome, rather than dangerous, spirit, and the task was perfectly suited to his cruel temper. The most illustrious members of the senate, whom Diocletian always affected to esteem, were involved, by his colleague, in the accusation of imaginary plots; and the possession of an elegant villa, or a well-cultivated estate, was interpreted as a convincing evidence of guilt.[98] The camp of the Prætorians, which had so long oppressed, began to protect, the majesty of Rome; and as those haughty troops were conscious of the decline of their power, they were naturally disposed to unite their strength with the authority of the senate. By the prudent measures of Diocletian, the numbers of the Prætorians were insensibly reduced, their privileges abolished,[99] and their place supplied by two faithful

New bodies of guards, Jovians and Herculians

[97] Lactant. de M. P. c. 17. On a similar occasion Ammianus mentions the *dicacitas plebis*, as not very agreeable to an Imperial ear. (See l. xvi. c. 10) [*dicacitate plebis oblectabatur* are the words of Ammian.].

[98] Lactantius accuses Maximian of destroying fictis criminationibus lumina senatûs (De M. P. c. 8). Aurelius Victor speaks very doubtfully of the faith of Diocletian towards his friends.

[99] Truncatæ vires urbis, imminuto prætoriarum cohortium atque in armis vulgi numero. Aurelius Victor [ib.]. Lactantius attributes to Galerius the prosecution of the same plan (c. 26).

legions of Illyricum, who, under the new titles of Jovians and Herculians, were appointed to perform the service of the Imperial guards.[100] But the most fatal though secret wound, which the senate received from the hands of Diocletian and Maximian, was inflicted by the inevitable operation of their absence. As long as the emperors resided at Rome, that assembly might be oppressed, but it could scarcely be neglected. The successors of Augustus exercised the power of dictating whatever laws their wisdom or caprice might suggest; but those laws were ratified by the sanction of the senate. The model of ancient freedom was preserved in its deliberations and decrees; and wise princes, who respected the prejudices of the Roman people, were in some measure obliged to assume the language and behaviour suitable to the general and first magistrate of the republic. In the armies and in the provinces, they displayed the dignity of monarchs; and, when they fixed their residence at a distance from the capital, they for ever laid aside the dissimulation which Augustus had recommended to his successors. In the exercise of the legislative as well as of the executive power, the sovereign advised with his ministers, instead of consulting the great council of the nation. The name of the senate was mentioned with honour till the last period of the empire; the vanity of its members was still flattered with honorary distinctions;[101] but the assembly, which had so long been the source, and so long the instrument, of power, was respectfully suffered to sink into oblivion. The senate of Rome, losing all connexion with the Imperial court and the actual constitution, was left a venerable but useless monument of antiquity on the Capitoline hill.

Civil magistracies laid aside

When the Roman princes had lost sight of the senate and of their ancient capital, they easily forgot the origin and nature of their legal power. The civil offices of consul, of proconsul, of censor, and of tribune, by the union of which it had been formed, betrayed to the people its republican extraction. Those modest titles were laid aside;[102] and, if they still distinguished their high station by the appellation of Emperor,

[100] They were old corps stationed in Illyricum; and, according to the ancient establishment, they each consisted of six thousand men. They had acquired much reputation by the use of the *plumbatæ*, or darts loaded with lead. Each soldier carried five of these, which he darted from a considerable distance, with great strength and dexterity. See Vegetius, i. 17.

[101] See the Theodosian Code, l. vi. tit. ii. with Godefroy's commentary.

[102] See the 12th dissertation in Spanheim's excellent work De Usu Numismatum. From medals, inscriptions, and historians, he examines every title separately, and traces it from Augustus to the moment of its disappearing.

or IMPERATOR, that word was understood in a new and more dignified sense, and no longer denoted the general of the Roman armies, but the sovereign of the Roman world. The name of Emperor, which was at first of a military nature, was associated with another of a more servile kind. The epithet of DOMINUS, or Lord, in its primitive signification, was expressive, not of the authority of a prince over his subjects, or of a commander over his soldiers, but of the despotic power of a master over his domestic slaves.[103] Viewing it in that odious light, it had been rejected with abhorrence by the first Cæsars. Their resistance insensibly became more feeble, and the name less odious; till at length the style of *our Lord and Emperor* was not only bestowed by flattery, but was regularly admitted into the laws and public monuments. Such lofty epithets were sufficient to elate and satisfy the most excessive vanity; and, if the successors of Diocletian still declined the title of King, it seems to have been the effect not so much of their moderation as of their delicacy. Wherever the Latin tongue was in use (and it was the language of government throughout the empire), the Imperial title, as it was peculiar to themselves, conveyed a more respectable idea than the name of king, which they must have shared with an hundred barbarian chieftains; or which, at the best, they could derive only from Romulus or from Tarquin. But the sentiments of the East were very different from those of the West. From the earliest period of history, the sovereigns of Asia had been celebrated in the Greek language by the title of BASILEUS, or King; and since it was considered as the first distinction among men, it was soon employed by the servile provincials of the East in their humble addresses to the Roman throne.[104] Even the attributes, or at least the titles, of the DIVINITY, were usurped by Diocletian and Maximian, who transmitted them to a succession of Christian emperors.[105] Such

Imperial dignity and titles

[103] Pliny (in Panegyr. c. 3, 55, &c.) speaks of *Dominus* with execration, as synonymous to Tyrant, and opposite to Prince. And the same Pliny regularly gives that title (in the tenth book of his epistles) to his friend rather than master, the virtuous Trajan. This strange expression puzzles the commentators who think, and the translators who can write.

[104] Synesius de Regno, Edit. Petav. p. 15. I am indebted for this quotation to the Abbé de la Bléterie.

[105] See Van Dale de Consecratione, p. 534, &c. It was customary for the emperors to mention (in the preamble of laws) their *numen*, *sacred majesty*, *divine oracles*, &c. According to Tillemont, Gregory of Nazianzen complains most bitterly of the profanation, especially when it was practised by an Arian emperor. ["Gregory of Nazianzen" is as incorrect an expression as "Thomas of Aquinate" would be. The name of Gregory's birthplace is Nazianzus, so that he may be distinguished from his namesake of Nyssa, either as *Gregory of Nazianzus*, or as *Gregory Nazianzene*.

extravagant compliments, however, soon lose their impiety by losing their meaning; and when the ear is once accustomed to the sound, they are heard with indifference as vague though excessive professions of respect.

Diocletian assumes the diadem, and introduces the Persian ceremonial

From the time of Augustus to that of Diocletian, the Roman princes, conversing in a familiar manner among their fellow-citizens, were saluted only with the same respect that was usually paid to senators and magistrates. Their principal distinction was the Imperial or military robe of purple; whilst the senatorial garment was marked by a broad, and the equestrian by a narrow, band or stripe of the same honourable colour. The pride, or rather the policy, of Diocletian engaged that artful prince to introduce the stately magnificence of the court of Persia.[106] He ventured to assume the diadem, an ornament detested by the Romans as the odious ensign of royalty, and the use of which had been considered as the most desperate act of the madness of Caligula.[107] It was no more than a broad white fillet set with pearls, which encircled the emperor's head. The sumptuous robes of Diocletian and his successors were of silk and gold; and it is remarked, with indignation, that even their shoes were studded with the most precious gems. The access to their sacred person was every day rendered more difficult, by the institution of new forms and ceremonies. The avenues of the palace were strictly guarded by the various *schools*, as they began to be called, of domestic officers. The interior apartments were intrusted to the jealous vigilance of the eunuchs; the increase of whose numbers and influence was the most infallible symptom of the progress of despotism. When a subject was at length admitted to the Imperial presence, he was obliged, whatever might be his rank, to fall prostrate on the ground, and to adore, according to the eastern fashion, the divinity of his lord and master.[108] Diocletian was a man of sense, who, in the course of private as well as public life, had formed a just estimate both of himself and of mankind: nor is it easy to conceive that, in substituting the manners of Persia to those of Rome, he was seriously actuated by so mean a principle as that of vanity. He

[106] See Spanheim de Usu Numismat. Dissert. xii.

[107] [Aurelian wore the diadem (Aurel. Victor, Epit. 35, 5), and is styled *domino et deo* on coins. The senate was rigidly excluded from all share in the government; and the mark S.C. no longer appears on the copper coinage. He was popularly called "the schoolmaster of the senators". Thus Aurelian may be said to have begun the "absolutism," which Diocletian elaborated.]

[108] Aurelius Victor. Eutropius, ix. 26. It appears by the Panegyrists that the Romans were soon reconciled to the name and ceremony of adoration.

flattered himself that an ostentation of splendour and luxury would subdue the imagination of the multitude; that the monarch would be less exposed to the rude licence of the people and the soldiers, as his person was secluded from the public view; and that habits of submission would insensibly be productive of sentiments of veneration. Like the modesty affected by Augustus, the state maintained by Diocletian was a theatrical representation; but it must be confessed that, of the two comedies, the former was of a much more liberal and manly character than the latter. It was the aim of the one to disguise, and the object of the other to display, the unbounded power which the emperors possessed over the Roman world.

New form of administration, two Augusti, and two Cæsars

Ostentation was the first principle of the new system instituted by Diocletian. The second was division. He divided the empire, the provinces, and every branch of the civil as well as military administration. He multiplied the wheels of the machine of government, and rendered its operations less rapid but more secure. Whatever advantages, and whatever defects, might attend these innovations, they must be ascribed in a very great degree to the first inventor; but, as the new frame of policy was gradually improved and completed by succeeding princes, it will be more satisfactory to delay the consideration of it till the season of its full maturity and perfection.[109] Reserving, therefore, for the reign of Constantine a more exact picture of the new empire, we shall content ourselves with describing the principal and decisive outline, as it was traced by the hand of Diocletian. He had associated three colleagues in the exercise of the supreme power; and, as he was convinced that the abilities of a single man were inadequate to the public defence, he considered the joint administration of four princes not as a temporary expedient, but as a fundamental law of the constitution. It was his intention that the two elder princes should be distinguished by the use of the diadem, and the title of *Augusti:* that, as affection or esteem might direct their choice, they should regularly call to their assistance two subordinate colleagues; and that the *Cæsars,* rising in their turn to the first rank, should

[109] The innovations introduced by Diocletian are chiefly deduced,—1st, from some very strong passages in Lactantius; and 2dly, from the new and various offices, which, in the Theodosian code, appear *already* established in the beginning of the reign of Constantine. [It is only in some cases that we can distinguish with probability, and only in a few with certainty, between the work of Diocletian and that of Constantine in organizing the new constitution of the Empire. An editor must follow the author's judicious example and reserve his supplementary remarks for the fuller picture in chap. xvii.]

supply an uninterrupted succession of emperors. The empire was divided into four parts. The East and Italy were the most honourable, the Danube and the Rhine the most laborious stations. The former claimed the presence of the *Augusti*, the latter were intrusted to the administration of the *Cæsars*. The strength of the legions was in the hands of the four partners of sovereignty, and the despair of successively vanquishing four formidable rivals might intimidate the ambition of an aspiring general. In their civil government, the emperors were supposed to exercise the undivided power of the monarch, and their edicts, inscribed with their joint names, were received in all the provinces, as promulgated by their mutual councils and authority.[110] Notwithstanding these precautions, the political union of the Roman world was gradually dissolved, and a principle of division was introduced, which, in the course of a few years, occasioned the perpetual separation of the eastern and western empires.

Increase of taxes

The system of Diocletian was accompanied with another very material disadvantage, which cannot even at present be totally overlooked; a more expensive establishment, and consequently an increase of taxes, and the oppression of the people. Instead of a modest family of slaves and freedmen, such as had contented the simple greatness of Augustus and Trajan, three or four magnificent courts were established in the various parts of the empire, and as many Roman *kings* contended with each other and with the Persian monarch for the vain superiority of pomp and luxury. The number of ministers, of magistrates, of officers, and of servants, who filled the different departments of the state, was multiplied beyond the example of former times; and (if we may borrow the warm expression of a contemporary) "when the proportion of those who received exceeded the proportion of those who contributed, the provinces were oppressed by the weight of tributes".[111] From this period to the extinction of the empire, it would be easy to deduce an uninterrupted series of clamours and complaints. According to his religion and situation, each writer chooses either Diocletian, or Constantine, or Valens, or Theodosius, for the object of his invectives; but they unanimously agree in representing the burden of the public impositions, and particularly the land-tax and capitation, as the intolerable

[110] [The consulate was in the fourth and fifth centuries the chief symbol of the theoretical unity of the Empire. Before the end of the fourth century the custom was established that one consul was appointed by the Eastern, the other by the Western, Augustus.]

[111] Lactant. de. M. P. c. 7.

and increasing grievance of their own times. From such a concurrence, an impartial historian, who is obliged to extract truth from satire as well as from panegyric, will be inclined to divide the blame among the princes whom they accuse, and to ascribe their exactions much less to their personal vices than to the uniform system of their administration. The emperor Diocletian was, indeed, the author of that system; but during his reign the growing evil was confined within the bounds of modesty and discretion, and he deserves the reproach of establishing pernicious precedents, rather than of exercising actual oppression.[112] It may be added, that his revenues were managed with prudent economy; and that, after all the current expenses were discharged, there still remained in the Imperial treasury an ample position either for judicious liberality or for any emergency of the state.

Abdication of Diocletian and Maximian

It was in the twenty-first year of his reign that Diocletian executed his memorable resolution of abdicating the empire; an action more naturally to have been expected from the elder or the younger Antoninus, than from a prince who had never practised the lessons of philosophy either in the attainment or in the use of supreme power. Diocletian acquired the glory of giving to the world the first example of a resignation,[113] which has not been very frequently imitated by succeeding monarchs. The parallel of Charles the Fifth, however, will naturally offer itself to our mind, not only since the eloquence of a modern historian has rendered that name so familiar to an English reader, but from the very striking resemblance between the characters of the two emperors, whose political abilities were superior to their military genius, and whose specious virtues were much less the effect of nature than of art. The abdication of Charles appears to have been hastened by the vicissitude of fortune; and the disappointment of his favourite schemes urged him to relinquish a power which he found inadequate to his ambition. But the reign of Diocletian had flowed with a tide of uninterrupted success; nor was it till after he had vanquished all his enemies, and accomplished all his designs, that he seems

Resemblance to Charles the Fifth

[112] Indicta lex nova quæ sane illorum temporum modestiâ tolerabilis, in perniciem processit. Aurel. Victor [Cæs. 39], who has treated the character of Diocletian with good sense, though in bad Latin.

[113] Solus omnium post conditum Romanum Imperium, qui ex tanto fastigio sponte ad privatæ vitæ statum civilitatemque remearet. Eutrop. ix. 28. [The expression of Eutropius is more accurate than that of Gibbon. We have an instance of an earlier resignation in the case of Ptolemy Sôtêr (abdicated 285, died 283, B.C.).]

to have entertained any serious thoughts of resigning the empire. Neither Charles nor Diocletian were arrived at a very advanced period of life; since the one was only fifty-five, and the other was no more than fifty-nine, years of age; but the active life of those princes, their wars and journeys, the cares of royalty, and their application to business, had already impaired their constitution, and brought on the infirmities of a premature old age.[114]

A.D. 304. Long illness of Diocletian

Notwithstanding the severity of a very cold and rainy winter, Diocletian left Italy soon after the ceremony of his triumph, and began his progress towards the East round the circuit of the Illyrian provinces. From the inclemency of the weather, and the fatigue of the journey, he soon contracted a slow illness; and, though he made easy marches, and was generally carried in a close litter, his disorder, before he arrived at Nicomedia, about the end of the summer, was become very serious and alarming. During the whole winter he was confined to his palace; his danger inspired a general and unaffected concern; but the people could only judge of the various alterations of his health from the joy or consternation which they discovered in the countenances and behaviour of his attendants. The rumour of his death was for some time universally believed, and it was supposed to be concealed with a view to prevent the troubles that might have happened during the absence of the Cæsar Galerius. At length, however, on the first of March, Diocletian once more appeared in public, but so pale and emaciated that he could scarcely have been recognized by those to whom his person was the most familiar. It was time to put an end to the painful struggle, which he had sustained during more than a year, between the care of his health and that of his dignity. The former required indulgence and relaxation, the latter compelled him to direct, from the bed of sickness, the administration of a great empire. He resolved to pass the remainder of his days in honourable repose, to place his glory beyond the reach of fortune, and to relinquish the theatre of the world to his younger and more active associates.[115]

His prudence

[114] The particulars of the journey and illness are taken from Lactantius (c. 17), who may *sometimes* be admitted as an evidence of public facts, though very seldom of private anecdotes.

[115] Aurelius Victor [ib.] ascribes the abdication, which had been so variously accounted for, to two causes: 1st, Diocletian's contempt of ambition; and 2dly, His apprehension of impending troubles. One of the panegyrists (vi. 9) mentions the age and infirmities of Diocletian as a very natural reason for his retirement. [His illness was doubtless the chief cause of his abdication.]

The ceremony of his abdication was performed in a spacious plain, about three miles from Nicomedia. The emperor ascended a lofty throne, and in a speech, full of reason and dignity, declared his intention, both to the people and to the soldiers who were assembled on this extraordinary occasion. As soon as he had divested himself of the purple, he withdrew from the gazing multitude, and, traversing the city in a covered chariot, proceeded, without delay, to the favourite retirement which he had chosen in his native country of Dalmatia. On the same day, which was the first of May,[116] Maximian, as it had been previously concerted, made his resignation of the Imperial dignity at Milan. Even in the splendour of the Roman triumph, Diocletian had meditated his design of abdicating the government. As he wished to secure the obedience of Maximian, he exacted from him either a general assurance that he would submit his actions to the authority of his benefactor, or a particular promise that he would descend from the throne, whenever he should receive the advice and the example. This engagement, though it was confirmed by the solemnity of an oath before the altar of the Capitoline Jupiter,[117] would have proved a feeble restraint on the fierce temper of Maximian, whose passion was the love of power, and who neither desired present tranquillity nor future reputation. But he yielded, however reluctantly, to the ascendant which his wiser colleague had acquired over him, and retired, immediately after his abdication, to a villa in Lucania, where it was almost impossible that such an impatient spirit could find any lasting tranquillity.

A.D. 305. May 1

Compliance of Maximian

Diocletian, who, from a servile origin, had raised himself to the throne, passed the nine last years of his life in a private condition. Reason had dictated, and content seems to have accompanied, his retreat, in which he enjoyed for a long time the respect of those princes to whom he had resigned the possession of the world.[118] It is seldom that minds long exercised in business have formed any habits of conversing with themselves, and in the loss of power they principally regret the

Retirement of Diocletian at Salona

[116] The difficulties as well as mistakes attending the dates both of the year and of the day of Diocletian's abdication are perfectly cleared up by Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv. p. 525, Note 19, and by Pagi ad annum.

[117] See Panegyr. Veter. vi. 9 [8]. The oration was pronounced after Maximian had reassumed the purple.

[118] Eumenius pays him a very fine compliment, "At enim divinum illum virum, qui primus imperium et participavit et posuit, consilii et facti sui non pœnitet; nec amisisse se putat quod sponte transcripsit. Felix beatusque vere quem vestra, tantorum principum, colunt obsequia privatum." Panegyr. Vet. vii. 15.

want of occupation. The amusements of letters and of devotion, which afford so many resources in solitude, were incapable of fixing the attention of Diocletian; but he had preserved, or at least he soon recovered, a taste for the most innocent as well as natural pleasures; and his leisure hours were sufficiently employed in building, planting, and gardening. His answer to Maximian is deservedly celebrated. He was solicited by that restless old man to reassume the reins of government and the Imperial purple. He rejected the temptation with a smile of pity, calmly observing that, if he could show Maximian the cabbages which he had planted with his own hands at Salona, he should no longer be urged to relinquish the enjoyment of happiness for the pursuit of power.[119] In his conversations with his friends, he frequently acknowledged that, of all arts, the most difficult was the art of reigning; and he expressed himself on that favourite topic with a degree of warmth which could be the result only of experience. "How often," was he accustomed to say, "is it the interest of four or five ministers to combine together to deceive their sovereign! Secluded from mankind by his exalted dignity, the truth is concealed from his knowledge; he can see only with their eyes, he hears nothing but their misrepresentations. He confers the most important offices upon vice and weakness, and disgraces the most virtuous and deserving among his subjects. By such infamous arts," added Diocletian, "the best and wisest princes are sold to the venal corruption of their courtiers."[120] A just estimate of greatness, and the assurance of immortal fame, improve our relish for the pleasures of retirement; but the Roman emperor had filled too important a character in the world to enjoy without allay the comforts and security of a private condition. It was impossible that he could remain ignorant of the troubles which afflicted the empire after his abdication. It was impossible that he could be indifferent to their consequences. Fear, sorrow and discontent sometimes pursued him into the solitude of Salona. His tenderness, or at least his pride, was deeply wounded by the misfortunes of his wife and daughter; and the last moments of Diocletian were embittered by some affronts, which Licinius and Constantine might have spared the father of so many emperors, and the first author of their own

His philosophy

[119] We are obliged to the younger Victor [Epit. 39] for this celebrated bon mot. Eutropius [ix. 28] mentions the thing in a more general manner.

[120] Hist. August. p. 223, 224 [xxvi. 43]. Vopiscus had learned this conversation from his father.

fortune. A report, though of a very doubtful nature, has reached our times, that he prudently withdrew himself from their power by a voluntary death.[121] and death, A.D. 313 [? A.D. 316]

Before we dismiss the consideration of the life and character of Diocletian, we may, for a moment, direct our view to the place of his retirement. Salona, a principal city of his native province of Dalmatia, was near two hundred Roman miles (according to the measurement of the public highways) from Aquileia and the confines of Italy, and about two hundred and seventy from Sirmium, the usual residence of the emperors whenever they visited the Illyrian frontier.[122] A miserable village still preserves the name of Salona, but so late as the sixteenth century, the remains of a theatre, and a confused prospect of broken arches and marble columns, continued to attest its ancient splendour.[123] About six or seven miles from the city, Diocletian constructed a magnificent palace, and we may infer from the greatness of the work, how long he had meditated his design of abdicating the empire. The choice of a spot which united all that could contribute either to health or to luxury did not require the partiality of a native. "The soil was dry and fertile, the air is pure and wholesome, and, though extremely hot during the summer months, this country seldom feels those sultry and noxious winds to which the coast of Istria and some parts of Italy are exposed. The views from the palace are no less beautiful than the soil and climate were inviting. Towards the west lies the fertile shore that stretches along the Hadriatic, in which a number of small islands are scattered in such a manner as to give this part of the sea the appearance of a great lake. On the north side lies the bay, which led to the ancient city of Salona, and the country beyond it, appearing in sight, forms a proper contrast to that more extensive prospect of water, which the Hadriatic presents both to the south and to the east. Towards the north, the view is terminated by high and irregular mountains, situated at a proper distance, and, in many places, covered with villages, woods and vineyards." [124] Description of Salona and the adjacent country

[121] The younger Victor [ib.] slightly mentions the report. But, as Diocletian had disobliged a powerful and successful party, his memory has been loaded with every crime and misfortune. It has been affirmed that he died raving mad, that he was condemned as a criminal by the Roman senate, &c.

[122] See the Itiner. p. 269, 272, edit. Wessel.

[123] The Abate Fortis, in his Viaggio in Dalmazia, p. 43 (printed at Venice, in the year 1774, in two small volumes in quarto), quotes a Ms. account of the antiquities of Salona, composed by Giambattista Giustiniani about the middle of the xvith century. [See Mr. Jackson's work on Dalmatia (cp. above, p. 22); and Mr. Freeman' essay in Historical Essays, 2nd series.]

[124] Adam's Antiquities of Diocletian's Palace at Spalatro, p. 6. We may add a

Of Diocletian's palace

Though Constantine, from a very obvious prejudice, affects to mention the palace of Diocletian with contempt,[125] yet one of their successors, who could only see it in a neglected and mutilated state, celebrates its magnificence in terms of the highest admiration.[126] It covered an extent of ground consisting of between nine and ten English acres. The form was quadrangular, flanked with sixteen towers. Two of the sides were near six hundred, and the other two near seven hundred, feet in length. The whole was constructed of a beautiful freestone, extracted from the neighbouring quarries of Trau or Tragutium,[127] and very little inferior to marble itself. Four streets, intersecting each other at right angles, divided the several parts of this great edifice, and the approach to the principal apartment was from a very stately entrance, which is still denominated the Golden Gate. The approach was terminated by a *peristylium* of granite columns, on one side of which we discover the square temple of Æsculapius, on the other the octagon temple of Jupiter. The latter of those deities Diocletian revered as the patron of his fortunes, the former as the protector of his health. By comparing the present remains with the precepts of Vitruvius, the several parts of the building, the baths, bedchamber, the *atrium*, the *basilica*, and the Cyzicene, Corinthian, and Egyptian halls have been described with some degree of precision, or at least of probability. Their forms were various, their proportions just, but they were all attended with two imperfections, very repugnant to our modern notions of taste and conveniency. These stately rooms had neither windows nor chimneys. They were lighted from the top (for the building seems to have consisted of no more than one storey), and they received their heat by the help of pipes that were conveyed along the walls. The range of principal apartments was protected towards the south-west by a portico five hundred and seventeen feet long, which must have formed a very noble and delightful walk, when the beauties of painting and sculpture were added to those of the prospect.

circumstance or two from the Abate Fortis; the little stream of the Hyader, mentioned by Lucan, produces most exquisite trout, which a sagacious writer, perhaps a monk, supposes to have been one of the principal reasons that determined Diocletian in the choice of his retirement. Fortis, p. 45. The same author (p. 38) observes that a taste for agriculture is reviving at Spalatro; and that an experimental farm has lately been established near the city, by a society of gentlemen.

[125] Constantin. Orat. ad Cœtum Sanct. c. 25. In this sermon, the emperor, or the bishop who composed it for him, affects to relate the miserable end of all the persecutors of the church.

[126] Constantin. Porphyr. de Statu. Imper. p. 86 [iii. p. 125, ed. Bonn].

[127] [Tragurium is the name; now Traü.]

Had this magnificent edifice remained in a solitary country, it would have been exposed to the ravages of time; but it might, perhaps, have escaped the rapacious industry of man. The village of Aspalathus,[128] and, long afterwards, the provincial town of Spalatro, have grown out of its ruins. The Golden Gate now opens into the market place. St. John the Baptist has usurped the honours of Æsculapius; and the temple of Jupiter, under the protection of the Virgin, is converted into the cathedral church. For this account of Diocletian's palace we are principally indebted to an ingenious artist of our own time and country, whom a very liberal curiosity carried into the heart of Dalmatia.[129] But there is room to suspect that the elegance of his designs and engraving has somewhat flattered the objects which it was their purpose to represent. We are informed by a more recent and very judicious traveller that the awful ruins of Spalatro are not less expressive of the decline of the arts than of the greatness of the Roman empire in the time of Diocletian.[130] If such was indeed the state of architecture, we must naturally believe that painting and sculpture had experienced a still more sensible decay. The practice of architecture is directed by a few general and even mechanical rules. But sculpture, and, above all, painting, propose to themselves the imitation not only of the forms of nature, but of the characters and passions of the human soul. In those sublime arts, the dexterity of the hand is of little avail, unless it is animated by fancy and guided by the most correct taste and observation.

Decline of the arts

It is almost unnecessary to remark that the civil distractions of the empire, the licence of the soldiers, the inroads of the barbarians, and the progress of despotism had proved very unfavourable to genius, and even to learning. The succession of Illyrian princes restored the empire, without restoring the sciences. Their military education was not calculated to inspire them with the love of letters; and even the mind of Diocletian, however active and capacious in business, was totally uninformed by study or speculation. The professions of law and physic are

Of letters

[128] D'Anville, Géographie Ancienne, tom. i. p. 162.

[129] Messieurs Adam and Clerisseau, attended by two draughtsmen, visited Spalatro in the month of July, 1757. The magnificent work which their journey produced was published in London seven years afterwards.

[130] I shall quote the words of the Abate Fortis. "E'bastevolmente nota agli amatori dell' Architettura, e dell' Antichità, l'opera del Signor ADAMS, che a donato molto a que' superbi vestigi coll'abituale eleganza del suo toccalapis e del bulino. In generale la rozzezza del scalpello, e'l cattivo gusto del secolo vi gareggiano colla magnificenza del fabricato." See Viaggio in Dalmazia, p. 40.

of such common use and certain profit that they will always secure a sufficient number of practitioners endowed with a reasonable degree of abilities and knowledge; but it does not appear that the students in those two faculties appeal to any celebrated masters who have flourished within that period. The voice of poetry was silent. History was reduced to dry and confused abridgments, alike destitute of amusement and instruction. A languid and affected eloquence was still retained in the pay and service of the emperors, who encouraged not any arts except those which contributed to the gratification of their pride or the defence of their power.[131]

The new Platonists

The declining age of learning and of mankind is marked, however, by the rise and rapid progress of the new Platonists. The school of Alexandria silenced those of Athens; and the ancient sects enrolled themselves under the banners of the more fashionable teachers, who recommended their system by the novelty of their method and the austerity of their manners. Several of these masters, Ammonius, Plotinus, Amelius, and Porphyry,[132] were men of profound thought and intense application; but, by mistaking the true object of philosophy, their labours contributed much less to improve than to corrupt the human understanding. The knowledge that is suited to our situation and powers, the whole compass of moral, natural, and mathematical science, was neglected by the new Platonists, whilst they exhausted their strength in the verbal disputes of metaphysics, attempted to explore the secrets of the invisible world, and studied to reconcile Aristotle with Plato, on subjects of which both these philosophers were as ignorant as the rest of mankind. Consuming their reason in these deep but unsubstantial meditations, their minds were exposed to illusions of fancy. They flattered themselves that they possessed the secret of disengaging the soul from its corporeal prison; claimed a familiar intercourse with dæmons and spirits; and, by a very singular revolution, converted the study of philosophy into that

[131] The orator Eumenius was secretary to the emperors Maximian and Constantius, and Professor of Rhetoric in the College of Autun. His salary was six hundred thousand sesterces, which, according to the lowest computation of that age, must have exceeded three thousand pounds a year. He generously requested the permission of employing it in rebuilding the college. See his Oration De restaurandis scholis; which, though not exempt from vanity, may atone for his panegyrics.

[132] Porphyry died about the time of Diocletian's abdication. The life of his master Plotinus, which he composed, will give us the most complete idea of the genius of the sect, and the manners of its professors. This very curious piece is inserted in Fabricius, Bibliotheca Græca. tom. iv. p. 88-148 [and is included in the volume of Didot's library, which contains Diogenes Laertius].

of magic. The ancient sages had derided the popular superstition; after disguising its extravagance by the thin pretence of allegory, the disciplines of Plotinus and Porphyry became its most zealous defenders. As they agreed with the Christians in a few mysterious points of faith, they attacked the remainder of their theological system with all the fury of civil war The new Platonists would scarcely deserve a place in the history of science, but in that of the church the mention of them will very frequently occur.

CHAPTER XIV

Troubles after the abdication of Diocletian—Death of Constantius—Elevation of Constantine and Maxentius—Six Emperors at the same time—Death of Maximian and Galerius—Victories of Constantine over Maxentius and Licinius—Reunion of the Empire under the authority of Constantine

Period of civil wars and confusion, A.D. 305-323

The balance of power established by Diocletian submitted no longer than while it was sustained by the firm and dexterous hand of the founder. It required such a fortunate mixture of different tempers and abilities as could scarcely be found, or even expected, a second time; two emperors without jealousy, two Cæsars without ambition, and the same general interest invariably pursued by four independent princes. The abdication of Diocletian and Maximian was succeeded by eighteen years of discord and confusion. The empire was afflicted by five civil wars; and the remainder of the time was not so much a state of tranquillity as a suspension of arms between several hostile monarchs, who, viewing each other with an eye of fear and hatred, strove to increase their respective forces at the expense of their subjects.

Character and situation of Constantius

As soon as Diocletian and Maximian had resigned the purple, their station, according to the rules of the new constitution, was filled by the two Cæsars, Constantius and Galerius, who immediately assumed the title of Augustus.[1] The honours of seniority and precedence were allowed to the former of those princes, and he continued, under a new appellation, to administer his ancient department of Gaul, Spain,[2] and Britain. The government of those ample provinces was sufficient to exercise his talents, and to satisfy his ambition. Clemency, temperance, and moderation distinguished the amiable character of Constantius, and his

[1] M. De Montesquieu (Considérations sur la Grandeur et la Décadence des Romains, c. 17) supposes, on the authority of Orosius and Eusebius, that, on this occasion, the empire, for the first time, was *really* divided into two parts. It is difficult, however, to discover in what respect the plan of Galerius differed from that of Diocletian.

[2] [See below, note 19.]

fortunate subjects had frequently occasion to compare the virtues of their sovereign with the passions of Maximian, and even with the arts of Diocletian.[3] Instead of imitating their eastern pride and magnificence, Constantius preserved the modesty of a Roman prince. He declared, with unaffected sincerity, that his most valued treasure was in the hearts of his people, and that, whenever the dignity of the throne or the danger of the state required any extraordinary supply, he could depend with confidence on their gratitude and liberality.[4] The provincials of Gaul, Spain, and Britain, sensible of his worth and of their own happiness, reflected with anxiety on the declining health of the emperor Constantius, and the tender age of his numerous family, the issue of his second marriage with the daughter of Maximian.

Of Galerius

The stern temper of Galerius was cast in a very different mould; and, while he commanded the esteem of his subjects, he seldom condescended to solicit their affections. His fame in arms, and, above all, the success of the Persian war, had elated his haughty mind, which was naturally impatient of a superior, or even of an equal. If it were possible to rely on the partial testimony of an injudicious writer, we might ascribe the abdication of Diocletian to the menaces of Galerius, and relate the particulars of a *private* conversation between the two princes, in which the former discovered as much pusillanimity as the latter displayed ingratitude and arrogance.[5] But these obscure anecdotes are sufficiently refuted by an impartial view of the character and conduct of Diocletian. Whatever might otherwise have been his intentions, if he had apprehended any danger from the violence of Galerius, his good sense would have instructed him to prevent the ignominious contest; and, as he had held the sceptre with glory, he would have resigned it without disgrace.

The two Cæsars, Severus and Maximin

After the elevation of Constantius and Galerius to the rank

[3] Hic non modo amabilis, sed etiam venerabilis Gallis fuit; præcipue quòd Diocletiani suspectam prudentiam, et Maximiani sanguinariam violentiam imperio ejus evaserant. Eutrop. Breviar. x. i.

[4] Divitiis Provincialium (mel. *provinciarum*) ac privatorum studens, fisci commoda non admodum affectans; ducensque melius publicas opes a privatis haberi, quam intra unum claustrum reservari. Id. ibid. He carried this maxim so far, that whenever he gave an entertainment he was obliged to borrow a service of plate.

[5] Lactantius de Mort. Persecutor. c. 18. Were the particulars of this conference more consistent with truth and decency, we might still ask, how they came to the knowledge of an obscure rhetorician? But there are many historians who put us in mind of the admirable saying of the great Condé to Cardinal de Retz; "Ces coquins nous font parler et agir, comme ils auroient fait eux-mêmes à notre place".

of *Augusti*, two new *Cæsars* were required to supply their place, and to complete the system of the Imperial government. Diocletian was sincerely desirous of withdrawing himself from the world; he considered Galerius, who had married his daughter, as the firmest support of his family and of the empire; and he consented, without reluctance, that his successor should assume the merit as well as the envy of the important nomination. It was fixed without consulting the interest or inclination of the princes of the West. Each of them had a son who was arrived at the age of manhood, and who might have been deemed the most natural candidates for the vacant honour. But the impotent resentment of Maximian was no longer to be dreaded, and the moderate Constantius, though he might despise the dangers, was humanely apprehensive of the calamities, of civil war. The two persons whom Galerius promoted to the rank of Cæsar were much better suited to serve the views of his ambition; and their principal recommendation seems to have consisted in the want of merit or personal consequence. The first of these was Daza, or, as he was afterwards called, Maximin,[6] whose mother was the sister of Galerius. The unexperienced youth still betrayed by his manners and language his rustic education, when, to his own astonishment as well as that of the world, he was invested by Diocletian with the purple, exalted to the dignity of Cæsar, and intrusted with the sovereign command of Egypt and Syria.[7] At the same time, Severus, a faithful servant, addicted to pleasure, but not incapable of business, was sent to Milan, to receive from the reluctant hands of Maximian the Cæsarean ornaments, and the possession of Italy and Africa.[8] According to the forms of the constitution, Severus acknowledged the supremacy of the western emperor; but he was absolutely devoted to the commands of his benefactor Galerius, who, reserving to himself the intermediate countries from the confines of Italy to those of Syria, firmly established his power over three-fourths of the monarchy. In the full confidence that the approaching death of Constantius would leave him sole master of the Roman world, we are assured that he had arranged in his mind a long succession of future princes, and that he

[6] [Galerius Valerius Maximinus.]

[7] Sublatus nuper a pecoribus et silvis (says Lactantius, de M. P. c. 19) statim Scutarius, continuo Protector, mox Tribunus, postridie Cæsar, accepit Orientem. Aurelius Victor is too liberal in giving him the whole portion of Diocletian.

[8] His diligence and fidelity are acknowledged even by Lactantius, de M. P. c. 18. [Name: Flavius Valerius Severus.]

meditated his own retreat from public life after he should have accomplished a glorious reign of about twenty years.[9]

But, within less than eighteen months, two unexpected revolutions overturned the ambitious schemes of Galerius. The hopes of uniting the western provinces to his empire were disappointed by the elevation of Constantine; whilst Italy and Africa were lost by the successful revolt of Maxentius.

Ambition of Galerius disappointed by two revolutions

I. The fame of Constantine has rendered posterity attentive to the most minute circumstances of his life and actions. The place of his birth, as well as the condition of his mother Helena, have been the subject not only of literary but of national disputes. Notwithstanding the recent tradition, which assigns for her father a British king, we are obliged to confess that Helena was the daughter of an innkeeper;[10] but at the same time we may defend the legality of her marriage against those who have represented her as the concubine of Constantius.[11] The great Constantine was most probably born at Naissus, in Dacia,[12] and it is not surprising that, in a family and province

Birth, education and escape of Constantine, A.D. 274

[9] These schemes, however, rest only on the very doubtful authority of Lactantius, de M. P. c. 20.

[10] This tradition, unknown to the contemporaries of Constantine, was invented in the darkness of monasteries, was embellished by Jeffrey of Monmouth and the writers of the xiith century, has been defended by our antiquarians of the last age, and is seriously related in the ponderous history of England, compiled by Mr. Carte (vol. i. p. 147). He transports, however, the kingdom of Coil, the imaginary father of Helena, from Essex to the wall of Antoninus.

[11] Eutropius (x. 2) expresses, in a few words, the real truth, and the occasion of the error, "*ex obscuriori matrimonio* ejus filius". Zosimus (l. ii. p. 78 [8]) eagerly seized the most unfavourable report, and is followed by Orosius (vii. 25), whose authority is oddly enough overlooked by the indefatigable but partial Tillemont. By insisting on the divorce of Helena, Diocletian acknowledged her marriage.

[12] There are three opinions with regard to the place of Constantine's birth. 1. Our English antiquarians were used to dwell with rapture on the words of his panegyrist; "Britannias illic oriendo nobiles fecisti". But this celebrated passage may be referred with as much propriety to the accession as to the nativity of Constantine. 2. Some of the modern Greeks have ascribed the honour of his birth to Drepanum, a town on the gulf of Nicomedia (Cellarius, tom. ii. p. 174) which Constantine dignified with the name of Helenopolis, and Justinian adorned with many splendid buildings (Procop. de Edificiis, v. 2). It is indeed probable enough that Helena's father kept an inn at Drepanum; and that Constantius might lodge there when he returned from a Persian embassy in the reign of Aurelian. But in the wandering life of a soldier, the place of his marriage, and the place where his children are born, have very little connexion with each other. 3. The claim of Naissus is supported by the anonymous writer, published at the end of Ammianus, p. 710 [Anonymous Valesii, 2], and who in general copied very good materials; and it is confirmed by Julius Firmicus (de Astrologiâ, l. i. c. 4), who flourished under the reign of Constantine himself. [Mathesis was the name which the author himself, Julius Firmicus Maternus junior Siculus, gave to this work in eight Books.] Some objections have been raised against the integrity of the text, and the application, of the passage of Firmicus; but the former is established by the best Mss., and the latter is very ably defended by Lipsius de Magnitudine Romanâ, l. iv. c. 11, et Supplement.

distinguished only by the profession of arms, the youth should discover very little inclination to improve his mind by the acquisition of knowledge.[13] He was about eighteen years of age when his father was promoted to the rank of Cæsar; but that fortunate event was attended with his mother's divorce; and the splendour of an Imperial alliance reduced the son of Helena to a state of disgrace and humiliation. Instead of following Constantius in the West, he remained in the service of Diocletian, signalized his valour in the wars of Egypt and Persia, and gradually rose to the honourable station of a tribune of the first order. The figure of Constantine was tall and majestic; he was dexterous in all his exercises, intrepid in war, affable in peace; in his whole conduct the active spirit of youth was tempered by habitual prudence; and, while his mind was engrossed by ambition, he appeared cold and insensible to the allurements of pleasure. The favour of the people and soldiers, who had named him as a worthy candidate for the rank of Cæsar, served only to exasperate the jealousy of Galerius; and, though prudence might restrain him from exercising any open violence, an absolute monarch is seldom at a loss how to execute a sure and secret revenge.[14] Every hour increased the danger of Constantine and the anxiety of his father, who, by repeated letters, expressed the warmest desire of embracing his son. For some time the policy of Galerius supplied him with delays and excuses, but it was impossible long to refuse so natural a request of his associate, without maintaining his refusal by arms. The permission for the journey was reluctantly granted, and, whatever precautions the emperor might have taken to intercept a return, the consequences of which he, with so much reason, apprehended, they were effectually disappointed by the incredible diligence of Constantine.[15] Leaving the palace of Nicomedia in the night,

A.D. 292 [293?]

[13] Literis minus instructus. Anonym. ad Ammian. p. 710 [2, 2 (edited by Gardthausen with Ammianus, ii. p. 280 *sqq.*)].

[14] Galerius, or perhaps his own courage, exposed him to single combat with a Sarmatian (Anonym. p. 710 [2, 3]) and with a monstrous lion. See Praxagoras apud Photium, p. 63 [F.H.G. iv. p. 2]. Praxagoras, an Athenian philosopher, had written a life of Constantine, in two books, which are now lost. He was a contemporary.

[15] Zosimus, l. ii. p. 78, 79 [8]. Lactantius de M. P. c. 24. The former tells a very foolish story, that Constantine caused all the post horses, which he had used, to be hamstrung. Such a bloody execution, without preventing a pursuit, would have scattered suspicions and might have stopped his journey. [The question arises why Constantine remained so long in the East as he did. Schiller thinks that it was Diocletian's purpose, one day to invest him with the purple. There is even numismatic evidence that he was recognized in Alexandria as Cæsar before the nomination of Severus. Schiller, ii. 167.]

he traveled post through Bithynia, Thrace, Dacia, Pannonia, Italy, and Gaul, and, amidst the joyful acclamations of the people, reached the port of Boulogne in the very moment when his father was preparing to embark for Britain.[16]

Death of Constantius, and elevation of Constantine, A.D. 306, July 25

The British expedition, and an easy victory over the barbarians of Caledonia, were the last exploits of the reign of Constantius. He ended his life in the Imperial palace of York, fifteen months after he had assumed the title of Augustus, and almost fourteen years and a half after he had been promoted to the rank of Cæsar.[17] His death was immediately succeeded by the elevation of Constantine. The ideas of inheritance and succession are so very familiar that the generality of mankind consider them as founded, not only in reason, but in nature itself. Our imagination readily transfers the same principles from private property to public dominion: and, whenever a virtuous father leaves behind him a son whose merit seems to justify the esteem, or even the hopes, of the people, the joint influence of prejudice and of affection operates with irresistible weight. The flower of the western armies had followed Constantius into Britain, and the national troops were reinforced by a numerous body of Alemanni, who obeyed the orders of Crocus, one of their hereditary chieftains.[18] The opinion of their own importance, and the assurance that Britain, Gaul, and Spain [19] would acquiesce in their nomination, were diligently inculcated to the legions by the adherents of Constantine. The soldiers were asked, Whether they could hesitate a moment between the honour of placing at their head the worthy son of their beloved emperor and the ignominy of tamely expecting the arrival of some obscure stranger, on whom it might please the sovereign of Asia to bestow the armies and provinces of the West. It was insinuated to them that gratitude and liberality held a distinguished place among the virtues of Constantine; nor did

[16] Anonym. p. 710 [2, 4]. Panegyr. Veter. vii. 4. But Zosimus, l. ii. p. 79 [9], Eusebius de Vit. Constan. l. i. c. 21, and Lactantius de M. P. c. 24 suppose, with less accuracy, that he found his father on his death-bed [cp. Aurel. Victor, Cæs. 40].

[17] [A metrical epitaph (which Rossi supposed to be on Constans), found in two Mss., has been vindicated for Constantius by Mommsen in Hermes, vol. xxviii.]

[18] Cunctis qui aderant annitentibus, sed præcipue Croco (*alii Eroco*) Alamannorum Rege, auxilii gratiâ Constantium comitato, imperium capit. Victor Junior, [epit.] c. 41. This is perhaps the first instance of a barbarian king who assisted the Roman arms with an independent body of his own subjects. The practice grew familiar, and at last became fatal.

[19] [Spain was hardly in the dominion of Constantius, or of Constantine before his victory over Maxentius. It went at this time with Africa and Italy.]

that artful prince show himself to the troops, till they were prepared to salute him with the names of Augustus and Emperor. The throne was the object of his desires; and, had he been less actuated by ambition, it was his only means of safety. He was well acquainted with the character and sentiments of Galerius, and sufficiently apprized that, if he wished to live, he must determine to reign. The decent and even obstinate resistance which he chose to affect [20] was contrived to justify his usurpation; nor did he yield to the acclamations of the army, till he had provided the proper materials for a letter, which he immediately despatched to the emperor of the East. Constantine informed him of the melancholy event of his father's death, modestly asserted his natural claim to the succession, and respectfully lamented that the affectionate violence of his troops had not permitted him to solicit the Imperial purple in the regular and constitutional manner. The first emotions of Galerius were those of surprise, disappointment, and rage; and, as he could seldom restrain his passions, he loudly threatened that he would commit to the flames both the letter and the messenger. But his resentment insensibly subsided; and, when he recollected the doubtful chance of war, when he had weighed the character and strength of his adversary, he consented to embrace the honourable accommodation which the prudence of Constantine had left open to him. Without either condemning or ratifying the choice of the British army, Galerius accepted the son of his deceased colleague as the sovereign of the provinces beyond the Alps; but he gave him only the title of Cæsar, and the fourth rank among the Roman princes, whilst he conferred the vacant place of Augustus on his favourite Severus. The apparent harmony of the empire was still preserved, and Constantine, who already possessed the substance, expected, without impatience, an opportunity of obtaining the honours, of supreme power.[21]

He is acknowledged by Galerius, who gives him only the title of Cæsar, and that of Augustus to Severus

The children of Constantius by his second marriage were six in number, three of either sex, and whose Imperial descent might have solicited a preference over the meaner extraction of the son of Helena. But Constantine was in the thirty-second year of his age, in the full vigour both of mind and body, at the

The brothers and sisters of Constantine

[20] His panegyrist Eumenius (vii. 8) ventures to affirm, in the presence of Constantine, that he put spurs to his horse, and tried, but in vain, to escape from the hands of his soldiers.

[21] Lactantius de M. P. c. 25. Eumenius (vii. 8) gives a rhetorical turn to the whole transaction.

time when the eldest of his brothers could not possibly be more than thirteen years old. His claim of superior merit had been allowed and ratified by the dying emperor.[22] In his last moments Constantius bequeathed to his eldest son the care of the safety, as well as greatness, of the family; conjuring him to assume both the authority and the sentiments of a father with regard to the children of Theodora. Their liberal education, advantageous marriages, the secure dignity of their lives, and the first honours of the state with which they were invested, attest the fraternal affection of Constantine; and, as those princes possessed a mild and grateful disposition, they submitted without reluctance to the superiority of his genius and fortune.[23]

Discontent of the Romans at the apprehension of taxes

II. The ambitious spirit of Galerius was scarcely reconciled to the disappointment of his views upon the Gallic provinces, before the unexpected loss of Italy wounded his pride as well as power in a still more sensible part. The long absence of the emperors had filled Rome with discontent and indignation; and the people gradually discovered that the preference given to Nicomedia and Milan was not to be ascribed to the particular inclination of Diocletian, but to the permanent form of government which he had instituted. It was in vain that, a few months after his abdication, his successors dedicated, under his name, those magnificent baths, whose ruins still supply the ground as well as the materials for so many churches and convents.[24] The tranquillity of those elegant recesses of ease and luxury was disturbed by the impatient murmurs of the Romans; and a report was insensibly circulated that the sums expended in erecting those buildings would soon be required at their hands. About that time the avarice of Galerius, or perhaps the exigencies of the state, had induced him to make a very

[22] The choice of Constantine by his dying father, which is warranted by reason, and insinuated by Eumenius, seems to be confirmed by the most unexceptionable authority, the concurring evidence of Lactantius (de M. P. c. 24) and of Libanius (Oration i.), of Eusebius (in Vit. Constantin, l. i. c. 18, 21) and of Julian (Oration i. [p. 7]).

[23] Of the three sisters of Constantine, Constantia married the Emperor Licinius, Anastasia the Cæsar Bassianus, and Eutropia the consul Nepotianus. The three brothers were, Dalmatius, Julius Constantius, Annibalianus, of whom we shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

[24] See Gruter Inscrip. p. 178. The six princes are all mentioned, Diocletian and Maximian as the senior Augusti and fathers of the emperors. They jointly dedicate, for the use of *their own* Romans, this magnificent edifice. The architects have delineated the ruins of these *Thermae;* and the antiquarians, particularly Donatus and Nardini, have ascertained the ground which they covered. One of the great rooms is now the Carthusian church; and even one of the porter's lodges is sufficient to form another church, which belongs to the Feuillans.

strict and rigorous inquisition into the property of his subjects for the purpose of a general taxation, both on their lands and on their persons. A very minute survey appears to have been taken of their real estates; and, wherever there was the slightest suspicion of concealment, torture was very freely employed to obtain a sincere declaration of their personal wealth.[25] The privileges which had exalted Italy above the rank of the provinces were no longer regarded: and the officers of the revenue already began to number the Roman people, and to settle the proportion of the new taxes. Even when the spirit of freedom had been utterly extinguished, the tamest subjects have sometimes ventured to resist an unprecedented invasion of their property; but on this occasion the injury was aggravated by the insult, and the sense of private interest was quickened by that of national honour. The conquest of Macedonia, as we have already observed, had delivered the Roman people from the weight of personal taxes. Though they had experienced every form of despotism, they had now enjoyed that exemption near five hundred years; nor could they patiently brook the insolence of an Illyrian peasant, who, from his distant residence in Asia, presumed to number Rome among the tributary cities of his empire. The rising fury of the people was encouraged by the authority, or at least the connivance, of the senate; and the feeble remains of the Prætorian guards, who had reason to apprehend their own dissolution, embraced so honourable a pretence, and declared their readiness to draw their swords in the service of their oppressed country. It was the wish, and it soon became the hope, of every citizen, that, after expelling from Italy their foreign tyrants, they should elect a prince who, by the place of his residence, and by his maxims of government, might once more deserve the title of Roman emperor. The name as well as the situation of Maxentius determined in his favour the popular enthusiasm.

Maxentius declared emperor at Rome, A.D. 306, 28th [27th] Oct.

Maxentius was the son of the emperor Maximian, and he had married the daughter of Galerius. His birth and alliance seemed to offer him the fairest promise of succeeding to the empire; but his vices and incapacity procured him the same exclusion from the dignity of Cæsar which Constantine had deserved by a dangerous superiority of merit. The policy of Galerius preferred such associates as would never disgrace the choice, nor dispute the commands, of their benefactors. An ob-

[25] See Lactantius de M. P. c. 26, 31.

scure stranger was therefore raised to the throne of Italy, and the son of the late emperor of the West was left to enjoy the luxury of a private fortune in a villa a few miles distant from the capital. The gloomy passions of his soul, shame, vexation, and rage, were inflamed by envy on the news of Constantine's success; but the hopes of Maxentius revived with the public discontent, and he was easily persuaded to unite his personal injury and pretensions with the cause of the Roman people. Two Prætorian tribunes and a commissary of provisions undertook the management of the conspiracy; and, as every order of men was actuated by the same spirit, the immediate event was neither doubtful or difficult. The præfect of the city and a few magistrates, who maintained their fidelity to Severus, were massacred by the guards; and Maxentius, invested with the Imperial ornaments, was acknowledged by the applauding senate and people as the protector of the Roman freedom and dignity.[26] It is uncertain whether Maximian was previously acquainted with the conspiracy; but, as soon as the standard of rebellion was erected at Rome, the old emperor broke from the retirement where the authority of Diocletian had condemned him to pass a life of melancholy solitude, and concealed his returning ambition under the disguise of paternal tenderness. At the request of his son and of the senate, he condescended to reassume the purple. His ancient dignity, his experience, and his fame in arms added strength as well as reputation to the party of Maxentius.[27]

Maximian resumes the purple

According to the advice, or rather the orders, of his colleague, the emperor Severus immediately hastened to Rome, in the full confidence that, by his unexpected celerity, he should easily suppress the tumult of an unwarlike populace, commanded by a licentious youth. But he found on his arrival the gates of the city shut against him, the walls filled with men and arms, an experienced general at the head of the rebels, and his own troops without spirit or affection. A large body of Moors deserted to the enemy, allured by the promise of a large donative; and, if it be true that they had been levied by Maximian in his African war, preferring the natural feelings of gratitude to the artificial ties of allegiance. Anulinus, the Prætorian præfect, declared himself in favour of Maxentius, and drew after him the

Defeat and death of Severus

[26] [But as Cæsar, not as Augustus.]

[27] The vith Panegyric represents the conduct of Maximian in the most favourable light, and the ambiguous expression of Aurelius Victor, "retractante diu," may signify, either that he contrived, or that he opposed, the conspiracy. See Zosimus, l. ii. p. 79 [9] and Lactantius de M. P. c. 26.

most considerable part of the troops, accustomed to obey his commands. Rome, according to the expression of an orator, recalled her armies, and the unfortunate Severus, destitute of force and of counsel, retired, or rather fled, with precipitation to Ravenna. Here he might for some time have been safe. The fortifications of Ravenna were able to resist the attempts, and the morasses that surrounded the town were sufficient to prevent the approach, of the Italian army. The sea, which Severus commanded with a powerful fleet, secured him an inexhaustible supply of provisions, and gave a free entrance to the legions which, on the return of spring, would advance to his assistance from Illyricum and the East. Maximian, who conducted the siege in person, was soon convinced that he might waste his time and his army in the fruitless enterprise, and that he had nothing to hope either from force or famine. With an art more suitable to the character of Diocletian than to his own, he directed his attack, not so much against the walls of Ravenna as against the mind of Severus. The treachery which he had experienced disposed that unhappy prince to distrust the most sincere of his friends and adherents. The emissaries of Maximian easily persuaded his credulity that a conspiracy was formed to betray the town, and prevailed upon his fears not to expose himself to the discretion of an irritated conqueror, but to accept the faith of an honourable capitulation. He was at first received with humanity, and treated with respect. Maximian conducted the captive emperor to Rome, and gave him the most solemn assurances that he had secured his life by the resignation of the purple. But Severus could obtain only an easy death and an Imperial funeral. When the sentence was signified to him, the manner of executing it was left to his own choice; he preferred the favourite mode of the ancients, that of opening his veins: and, as soon as he expired, his body was carried to the sepulchre which had been constructed for the family of Gallienus.[28]

A.D. 307, February

Maximian gives his daughter Fausta, and the title of Augustus, to Constantine

Though the characters of Constantine and Maxentius had very little affinity with each other, their situation and interest were the same; and prudence seemed to require that they should unite their forces against the common enemy. Notwithstanding the superiority of his age and dignity, the indefatigable

A.D. 307, 31st March [?]

[28] The circumstances of this war, and the death of Severus, are very doubtfully and variously told in our ancient fragments (see Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv. part . p. 555). I have endeavoured to extract from them a consistent and probable narration. [It is probable that the death of Severus was due to the orders of Maxentius, not of Maximian. As to the mode of his death Gibbon follows Ldactantius, e M. P. 26. Otherwise Zosimus, ii. 10. Date doubtful.]

Maximian passed the Alps, and, courting a personal interview with the sovereign of Gaul, carried with him his daughter Fausta as the pledge of the new alliance. The marriage was celebrated at Arles with every circumstance of magnificence; and the ancient colleague of Diocletian, who again asserted his claim to the western empire, conferred on his son-in-law and ally the title of Augustus. By consenting to receive that honour from Maximian, Constantine seemed to embrace the cause of Rome and of the senate; but his professions were ambiguous, and his assistance slow and ineffectual. He considered with attention the approaching contest between the masters of Italy and the emperor of the East, and was prepared to consult his own safety or ambition in the event of the war.[29]

Galerius invades Italy

The importance of the occasion called for the presence and abilities of Galerius. At the head of a powerful army, collected from Illyricum and the East, he entered Italy, resolved to revenge the death of Severus, and to chastise the rebellious Romans; or, as he expressed his intentions, in the furious language of a barbarian, to extirpate the senate, and to destroy the people by the sword. But the skill of Maximian had concerted a prudent system of defence. The invader found every place hostile, fortified, and inaccessible; and, though he forced his way as far as Narni, within sixty miles of Rome, his dominion in Italy was confined to the narrow limits of his camp. Sensible of the increasing difficulties of his enterprise, the haughty Galerius made the first advances towards a reconciliation, and dispatched two of his most considerable officers to tempt the Roman princes by the offer of a conference and the declaration of his paternal regard for Maxentius, who might obtain much more from his liberality than he could hope from the doubtful

[29] The vith Panegyric was pronounced to celebrate the elevation of Constantine; but the prudent orator avoids the mention either of Galerius or of Maxentius. He introduces only one slight allusion to the actual troubles, and to the majesty, of Rome. [The narrative in the text must be corrected in two respects. Following Lactantius the author has placed the first visit of Maximian to Gaul out of its proper order, and he has wholly omitted to mention the Congress of Carnuntum. Maximian was in Italy during the invasion of Galerius. The latter, when he retired, appealed to Diocletian, who consented to be present at a conclave at Carnuntum and exert his influence over Maximian Herculius, in order to maintain the system which he had himself instituted. The congress met in November, 307; Maximian and Galerius were present. Diocletian for the second time induced Maximian to abdicate, and the vacant throne of the Augustus was filled by Licinius (who had probably been made Cæsar shortly before this). Maxentius was entirely excluded from the succession. Maximian then (before the end of the year) paid his first visit to Constantine, who had probably already assumed the title of Augustus, which his father-in-law now confirmed. See Eutropius, x. 3. Socrates, Hist. Ecc. i. 2. Schiller, ii. 177.]

chance of war.[30] The offers of Galerius were rejected with firmness, his perfidious friendship refused with contempt, and it was not long before he discovered that, unless he provided for his safety by a timely retreat, he had some reason to apprehend the fate of Severus. The wealth, which the Romans defended against his rapacious tyranny, they freely contributed for his destruction. The name of Maximian, the popular arts of his son, the secret distribution of large sums, and the promise of still more liberal rewards, checked the ardour and corrupted the fidelity of the Illyrian legions; and, when Galerius at length gave the signal of the retreat, it was with some difficulty that he could prevail on his veterans not to desert a banner which had so often conducted them to victory and honour. A contemporary writer assigns two other causes for the failure of the expedition; but they are both of such a nature that a cautious historian will scarcely venture to adopt them. We are told that Galerius, who had formed a very imperfect notion of the greatness of Rome by the cities of the East with which he was acquainted, found his forces inadequate to the siege of that immense capital. But the extent of a city serves only to render it more accessible to the enemy; Rome had long since been accustomed to submit on the approach of a conqueror; nor could the temporary enthusiasm of the people have long contended against the discipline and valour of the legions. We are likewise informed that the legions themselves were struck with horror and remorse, and that those pious sons of the republic refused to violate the sanctity of their venerable parent.[31] But, when we recollect with how much ease in the more ancient civil wars, the zeal of party and the habits of military obedience had converted the native citizens of Rome into her most implacable enemies, we shall be inclined to distrust this extreme delicacy of strangers and barbarians, who had never beheld Italy till they entered it in a hostile manner. Had they not been restrained by motives of a more interested nature, they would probably have answered Galerius in the words of Cæsar's veterans: "If our general wishes to lead us to the banks of the Tiber, we are prepared to trace out his camp. Whatsoever

[30] With regard to this negotiation, see the fragments of an anonymous Historian, published by Valesius at the end of his edition of Ammianus Marcellinus, p. 711 [3, 7]. These fragments have furnished us with several curious, and as it should seem authentic, anecdotes.

[31] Lactantius de M. P. c. 28 [*leg.* 27]. The former of these reasons is probably taken from Virgil's Shepherd; "Illam . . . ego huic nostræ similem Melibœe putavi, &c.". Lactantius delights in these poetical allusions.

walls he has determined to level with the ground, our hands are ready to work the engines: nor shall we hesitate, should the name of the devoted city be Rome itself." These are indeed the expressions of a poet; but of a poet who has been distinguished, and even censured, for his strict adherence to the truth of history.[32]

His retreat

The legions of Galerius exhibited a very melancholy proof of their disposition by the ravages which they committed in their retreat. They murdered, they ravished, they plundered, they drove away the flocks and herds of the Italians; they burnt the villages through which they passed, and they endeavoured to destroy the country, which it had not been in their power to subdue. During the whole march Maxentius hung on their rear; but he very prudently declined a general engagement with those brave and desperate veterans. His father had undertaken a second journey into Gaul, with the hope of persuading Constantine, who had assembled an army on the frontier, to join the pursuit and to complete the victory. But the actions of Constantine were guided by reason, and not by resentment. He persisted in the wise resolution of maintaining a balance of power in the divided empire, and he no longer hated Galerius when that aspiring prince had ceased to be an object of terror.[33]

Elevation of Licinius to the rank of Augustus, A.D. 307, Nov. 11

The mind of Galerius was the most susceptible of the sterner passions, but it was not however incapable of a sincere and lasting friendship. Licinius,[34] whose manners as well as character were not unlike his own, seems to have engaged both his affection and esteem. Their intimacy had commenced in the happier period, perhaps, of their youth and obscurity. It had been cemented by the freedom and dangers of a military life; they had advanced, almost by equal steps, through the successive honours of the service; and, as soon as Galerius was invested with the Imperial dignity, he seems to have conceived the design of raising his companion to the same rank with himself. During the short period of his prosperity, he considered the rank of

[32] Castra super Tusci si ponere Tybridis undas (*jubeas*),
Hesperios audax veniam metator in agros.
Tu quoscunque voles in planum effundere muros,
His aries actus disperget saxa lacertis;
Illa licet penitus tolli quam jusseris urbem
Roma sit. Lucan. Pharsal. i. 381.

[33] Lactantius de M. P. c. 27. Zosim. l. ii. p. 82 [10]. The latter insinuates that Constantine, in his interview with Maximian, had promised to declare war against Galerius.

[34] [Valerius Licinianus Licinius.]

Cæsar as unworthy of the age and merit of Licinius, and rather chose to reserve for him the place of Constantius, and the empire of the West. While the emperor was employed in the Italian war, he intrusted his friend with the defence of the Danube; and immediately after his return from that unfortunate expedition he invested Licinius with the vacant purple of Severus, resigning to his immediate command the provinces of Illyricum.[35] The news of his promotion was no sooner carried into the East, than Maximin, who governed, or rather oppressed, the countries of Egypt and Syria, betrayed his envy and discontent, disdained the inferior name of Cæsar, and, notwithstanding the prayers as well as arguments of Galerius, exacted, almost by violence, the equal title of Augustus.[36] For the first, and indeed for the last, time, the Roman world was administered by six emperors. In the West, Constantine and Maxentius affected to reverence their father Maximian. In the East, Licinius and Maximin honoured with more real consideration their benefactor Galerius. The opposition of interest, and the memory of a recent war, divided the empire into two great hostile powers; but their mutual fears produced an apparent tranquillity, and even a feigned reconciliation, till the deaths of the elder princes, of Maximian, and more particularly of Galerius, gave a new direction to the views and passions of their surviving associates.

and of Maximin

Six emperors, A.D. 308

Misfortunes of Maximian

When Maximian had reluctantly abdicated the empire, the venal orators of the times applauded his philosophic moderation. When his ambition excited, or at least encouraged, a civil war, they returned thanks to his generous patriotism, and gently censured that love of ease and retirement which had withdrawn him from the public service.[37] But it was impossible that minds like those of Maximian and his son could long possess in harmony an undivided power. Maxentius considered himself as the legal

[35] M. de Tillemont (Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv. part i. p. 559) has proved that Licinius, without passing through the intermediate rank of Cæsar, was declared Augustus, the 11th of November, A.D. 307, after the return of Galerius from Italy. [It is however possible and probable that Licinius was made Cæsar after the death of Severus.]

[36] Lactantius de M. P. c. 32. When Galerius declared Licinius Augustus with himself, he tried to satisfy his younger associates, by inventing for Constantine and *Maximin* (not *Maxentius*, see Baluze, p. 81) the new title of sons of the Augusti. But, when Maximin acquainted him that he had been saluted Augustus by the army, Galerius was obliged to acknowledge him, as well as Constantine, as equal associates in the Imperial dignity. [Date uncertain.]

[37] See Panegyr. Vet. vi. 9. Audi doloris nostri liberam vocem, &c. The whole passage is imagined with artful flattery, and expressed with an easy flow of eloquence.

sovereign of Italy, elected by the Roman senate and people; nor would he endure the control of his father, who arrogantly declared that by *his* name and abilities the rash youth had been established on the throne. The cause was solemnly pleaded before the Prætorian guards, and those troops, who dreaded the severity of the old emperor, espoused the party of Maxentius.[38] The life and freedom of Maximian were however respected, and he retired from Italy into Illyricum, affecting to lament his past conduct, and secretly contriving new mischiefs. But Galerius, who was well acquainted with his character, soon obliged him to leave his dominions, and the last refuge of the disappointed Maximian was the court of his son-in-law Constantine.[39] He was received with respect by that artful prince, and with the appearance of filial tenderness by the empress Fausta. That he might remove every suspicion, he resigned the Imperial purple a second time,[40] professing himself at length convinced of the vanity of greatness and ambition. Had he persevered in this resolution, he might have ended his life with less dignity indeed than in his first retirement, yet, however, with comfort and reputation. But the near prospect of a throne brought back to his remembrance the state from whence he was fallen, and he resolved, by a desperate effort, either to reign or to perish. An incursion of the Franks had summoned Constantine, with a part of his army, to the banks of the Rhine; the remainder of the troops were stationed in the southern provinces of Gaul, which lay exposed to the enterprises of the Italian emperor, and a considerable treasure was deposited in the city of Arles. Maximian either craftily invented, or hastily credited, a vain report of the death of Constantine. Without hesitation he ascended the throne, seized the treasure, and, scattering it with his accustomed profusion among the soldiers, endeavoured to awake in their minds the memory of his ancient dignity and exploits. Before he could establish his authority, or finish the negotiation

[38] Lactantius de M. P. c. 28. Zosim. l. ii. p. 82 [11]. A report was spread, that Maxentius was the son of some obscure Syrian, and had been substituted by the wife of Maximian as her own child. See Aurelius Victor, Anonym. Valesian [3, 6], and Panegyr. Vet. ix. 3, 4. [Maxentius declared himself sole Augustus in April, 308. See Chronogr. of 354, ed. Mommsen in Abh. of the Saxon Ges. der Wissensch. 1850, p. 628.]

[39] Ab urbe pulsum, ab Italia fugatum, ab Illyrico repudiatum, tuis provinciis, tuis copiis, tuo palatio recepisti. Eumen. in Panegyr. Vet. vii. 14.

[40] Lactantius de M. P. c. 29. Yet, after the resignation of the purple, Constantine still continued to Maximian the pomp and honours of the Imperial dignity; and on the public occasions gave the right-hand place to his father-in-law. Panegyr. Vet. vii. 15.

which he appears to have entered into with his son Maxentius, the celerity of Constantine defeated all his hopes. On the first news of his perfidy and ingratitude, that prince returned by rapid marches from the Rhine to the Saone, embarked on the last mentioned river at Chalons, and, at Lyons trusting himself to the rapidity of the Rhone, arrived at the gates of Arles, with a military force which it was impossible for Maximian to resist, and which scarcely permitted him to take refuge in the neighbouring city of Marseilles. The narrow neck of land which joined that place to the continent was fortified against the besiegers, whilst the sea was open, either for the escape of Maximian, or for the succours of Maxentius, if the latter should choose to disguise his invasion of Gaul under the honourable pretence of defending a distressed, or, as he might allege, an injured father. Apprehensive of the fatal consequences of delay, Constantine gave orders for an immediate assault; but the scaling ladders were found too short for the height of the walls, and Marseilles might have sustained as long a siege as it formerly [A.D. 308 did against the arms of Cæsar, if the garrison, conscious either of their fault or of their danger, had not purchased their pardon by delivering up the city and the person of Maximian. A secret His death, A.D. 310, February but irrevocable sentence of death was pronounced against the usurper; he obtained only the same favour which he had indulged to Severus, and it was published to the world that, oppressed by the remorse of his repeated crimes, he strangled himself with his own hands. After he had lost the assistance, and disdained the moderate counsels, of Diocletian, the second period of his active life was a series of public calamities and personal mortifications, which were terminated, in about three years, by an ignominious death. He deserved his fate; but we should find more reason to applaud the humanity of Constantine, if he had spared an old man, the benefactor of his father, and the father of his wife. During the whole of this melancholy transaction, it appears that Fausta sacrificed the sentiments of nature to her conjugal duties.[41]

Death of Galerius, A.D. 311, May The last years of Galerius were less shameful and unfortunate; and, though he had filled with more glory the subordinate station of Cæsar than the superior rank of Augustus, he preserved, till

[41] Zosim. l. ii. p. 82 [11]. Eumenius in Panegyr. Vet. vii. 16-21. The latter of these has undoubtedly represented the whole affair in the most favourable light for his sovereign. Yet even from this partial narrative we may conclude that the repeated clemency of Constantine, and the reiterated treasons of Maximian, as they are described by Lactantius (de M. P. c. 29, 30) and copied by the moderns, are destitute of any historical foundation. [A hazardous conclusion.]

the moment of his death, the first place among the princes of the Roman world. He survived his retreat from Italy about four years; and, wisely relinquishing his views of universal empire, he devoted the remainder of his life to the enjoyment of pleasure, and to the execution of some works of public utility; among which we may distinguish the discharging into the Danube the superfluous waters of the lake Pelso, and the cutting down the immense forests that encompassed it; an operation worthy of a monarch, since it gave an extensive country to the agriculture of his Pannonian subjects.[42] His death was occasioned by a very painful and lingering disorder. His body, swelled by an intemperate course of life to an unwieldy corpulence, was covered with ulcers, and devoured by innumerable swarms of those insects who have given their name to a most loathsome disease;[43] but, as Galerius had offended a very zealous and powerful party among his subjects, his sufferings, instead of exciting their compassion, have been celebrated as the visible effects of divine justice.[44] He had no sooner expired in his palace of Nicomedia,[45] than the two emperors who were indebted for their purple to his favour began to collect their forces, with the intention either of disputing, or of dividing, the dominions which he had left without a master. They were persuaded however to desist from the former design, and to agree in the latter. The provinces of Asia fell to the share of Maximin, and those of Europe augmented the portion of Licinius. The Hellespont and the Thracian Bosphorus formed their mutual boundary, and the banks of those narrow seas, which flowed in the midst of the Roman world, were covered with soldiers, with arms, and with fortifications. The deaths of Maximian and of Galerius reduced the number of

His dominion shared between Maximin and Licinius

[42] Aurelius Victor, [Cæs.] c. 40. But that lake was situated on the Upper Pannonia, near the borders of Noricum; and the province of Valeria (a name which the wife of Galerius gave to the drained country) undoubtedly lay between the Drave and the Danube (Sextus Rufus, c. 9). I should therefore suspect that Victor has confounded the lake Pelso, with the Volocean marshes, or, as they are now called, the lake Sabaton. It is placed in the heart of Valeria, and its present extent is not less than 12 Hungarian miles (about 70 English) in length, and two in breadth. See Severini Pannonia, l. i. c. 9.

[43] Lactantius (de M. P. c. 33) and Eusebius ([Hist. Ecc.] l. viii. c. 16) describe the symptoms and progress of his disorder with singular accuracy and apparent pleasure.

[44] If any (like the late Dr. Jortin, Remarks of Ecclesiastical History, vol. ii. p. 307-356) still delight in recording the wonderful deaths of the persecutors, I would recommend to their perusal an admirable passage of Grotius (Hist. l. vii. p. 332) concerning the last illness of Philip II. of Spain.

[45] [He died at Sardica. Anon. Val. 3, 8. (Salona, Chron. Pasch.)]

emperors to four.[46] The sense of their true interest soon connected Licinius and Constantine; a secret alliance was concluded between Maximin and Maxentius, and their unhappy subjects expected with terror the bloody consequences of their inevitable dissensions, which were no longer restrained by the fear or the respect which they had entertained for Galerius.[47]

Administration of Constantine in Gaul, A.D. 306-312

Among so many crimes and misfortunes occasioned by the passions of the Roman princes, there is some pleasure in discovering a single action which may be ascribed to their virtue. In the sixth year of his reign, Constantine visited the city of Autun, and generously remitted the arrears of tribute, reducing at the same time the proportion of their assessment, from twenty-five to eighteen thousand heads, subject to the real and personal capitation.[48] Yet even this indulgence affords the most unquestionable proof of the public misery. This tax was so extremely oppressive, either in itself or in the mode of collecting it, that, whilst the revenue was increased by extortion, it was diminished by despair: a considerable part of the territory of Autun was left uncultivated; and great numbers of the provincials rather chose to live as exiles and outlaws than to support the weight of civil society. It is but too probable that the bountiful emperor relieved, by a partial act of liberality, one among the many evils which he had caused by his general maxims of administration. But even those maxims were less the effect of choice than of necessity. And, if we except the death of Maximian, the reign of Constantine in Gaul seems to have been the most innocent and even virtuous period of his life. The provinces were protected by his presence from the inroads of the barbarians, who either dreaded or experienced his active valour. After a signal victory over the Franks and Alemanni, several of their princes were exposed by his order to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre of Treves, and the people seem to have enjoyed the spectacle, without discovering, in such a treatment of royal captives, anything that was repugnant to the laws of nations or of humanity.[49]

Tyranny of Maxentius in Italy and Africa, A.D. 306-312

The virtues of Constantine were rendered more illustrious by the vices of Maxentius. Whilst the Gallic provinces enjoyed as

[46] [But Maxentius was not recognized by the other three Augusti.]

[47] See Eusebius, l. ix. 6, 10. Lactantius de M. P. c. 36. Zosimus is less exact, and evidently confounds Maximian with Maximin.

[48] See the viiith Panegyr. in which Eumenius displays, in the presence of Constantine, the misery and the gratitude of the city of Autun.

[49] Eutropius, x. 2. Panegyr. Veter. vii. 10, 11, 12. A great number of the French youth were likewise exposed to the same cruel and ignominious death.

much happiness as the condition of the times was capable of receiving, Italy and Africa[50] groaned under the dominion of a tyrant as contemptible as he was odious. The zeal of flattery and faction has indeed too frequently sacrificed the reputation of the vanquished to the glory of their successful rivals; but even those writers who have revealed, with the most freedom and pleasure, the faults of Constantine, unanimously confess that Maxentius was cruel, rapacious, and profligate.[51] He had the good fortune to suppress a slight rebellion in Africa. The governor and a few adherents had been guilty; the province suffered for their crime. The flourishing cities of Cirtha and Carthage, and the whole extent of that fertile country, were wasted by fire and sword. The abuse of victory was followed by the abuse of law and justice. A formidable army of sycophants and delators invaded Africa; the rich and the noble were easily convicted of a connexion with the rebels; and those among them who experienced the emperor's clemency were only punished by the confiscation of their estates.[52] So signal a victory was celebrated by a magnificent triumph, and Maxentius exposed to the eyes of the people the spoils and captives of a Roman province. The state of the capital was no less deserving of compassion than that of Africa. The wealth of Rome supplied an inexhaustible fund for his vain and prodigal expenses, and the ministers of his revenue were skilled in the arts of rapine. It was under his reign that the method of exacting a *free gift* from the senators was first invented; and, as the sum was insensibly increased, the pretences of levying it, a victory, a birth, a marriage, or an Imperial consulship, were proportionably multiplied.[53] Maxentius had imbibed the same implacable aversion to the senate, which had characterized most of the former tyrants of Rome; nor was it possible for his ungrateful temper to forgive the generous fidelity which had raised him to the throne and supported him against all his enemies. The lives of the senators were exposed to his jealous suspicions,

[50] [Spain was also in the dominion of Maxentius. This is proved by the copper coins struck for him at Tarraco (and for his son Romulus). No coins were struck for him in Gaul and Britain.]

[51] Julian excludes Maxentius from the banquet of the Cæsars with abhorrence and contempt; and Zosimus (l. ii. p. 85 [14]) accuses him of every kind of cruelty and profligacy.

[52] Zosimus, l. ii. p. 83-85. Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 40].

[53] The passage of Aurelius Victor [ib.] should be read in the following manner. Primus instituto pessimo, *munerum* specie, Patres *Oratoresque* pecuniam conferre prodigenti sibi cogeret.

the dishonour of their wives and daughters heightened the gratification of his sensual passions.[54] It may be presumed that an Imperial lover was seldom reduced to sigh in vain; but, whenever persuasion proved ineffectual, he had recourse to violence; and there remains *one* memorable example of a noble matron, who preserved her chastity by a voluntary death. The soldiers were the only order of men whom he appeared to respect, or studied to please. He filled Rome and Italy with armed troops, connived at their tumults, suffered them with impunity to plunder, and even to massacre, the defenceless people;[55] and, indulging them in the same licentiousness which their emperor enjoyed, Maxentius often bestowed on his military favourites the splendid villa, or the beautiful wife, of a senator. A prince of such a character, alike incapable of governing either in peace or in war, might purchase the support, but he could never obtain the esteem, of the army. Yet his pride was equal to his other vices. Whilst he passed his indolent life, either within the walls of his palace, or in the neighbouring gardens of Sallust, he was repeatedly heard to declare, that *he alone* was emperor, and that the other princes were no more than his lieutenants, on whom he had devolved the defence of the frontier provinces, that he might enjoy without interruption the elegant luxury of the capital. Rome, which had so long regretted the absence, lamented, during the six years of his reign, the presence, of her sovereign.[56]

Civil war between Constantine and Maxentius, A.D. 312

Though Constantine might view the conduct of Maxentius with abhorrence, and the situation of the Romans with compassion, we have no reason to presume that he would have taken up arms to punish the one or to relieve the other. But the tyrant of Italy rashly ventured to provoke a formidable enemy, whose ambition had been hitherto restrained by considerations

[54] Panegyr. Vet. ix. 3. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. viii. 14, et in Vit. Constant. i. 33, 34. Rufinus, c. 17. The virtuous matron, who stabbed herself to escape the violence of Maxentius, was a Christian, wife to the præfect of the city, and her name was Sophronia. It still remains a question among the casuists, whether, on such occasions, suicide is justifiable.

[55] Prætorianis cædem vulgi quondam annueret, is the vague expression of Aurelius Victor [ib.]. See more particular, though somewhat different, accounts of a tumult and massacre which happened at Rome, in Eusebius (l. viii. c. 14) and in Zosimus (l. ii. p. 84 [13]).

[56] See in the Panegyrics (ix. 14) a lively description of the indolence and vain pride of Maxentius. In another place [ix. 3], the orator observes that the riches which Rome had accumulated in a period of 1060 years were lavished by the tyrant on his mercenary bands; redemptis ad civile latrocinium manibus ingesserat.

of prudence, rather than by principles of justice.[57] After the death of Maximian, his titles, according to the established custom, had been erased, and his statues thrown down with ignominy. His son, who had persecuted and deserted him when alive, affected to display the most pious regard for his memory, and gave orders that a similar treatment should be immediately inflicted on all the statues that had been erected in Italy and Africa to the honour of Constantine. That wise prince, who sincerely wished to decline a war, with the difficulty and importance of which he was sufficiently acquainted, at first dissembled the insult, and sought for redress by the milder expedients of negotiation, till he was convinced that the hostile and ambitious designs of the Italian emperor made it necessary for him to arm in his own defence. Maxentius, who openly avowed his pretensions to the whole monarchy of the West, had already prepared a very considerable force to invade the Gallic provinces on the side of Rhætia, and, though he could not expect any assistance from Licinius, he was flattered with the hope that the legions of Illyricum, allured by his presents and promises, would desert the standard of that prince, and unanimously declare themselves his soldiers and subjects.[58] Constantine no longer hesitated. He had deliberated with caution, he acted with vigour. He gave a private audience to the ambassadors, who, in the name of the senate and people, conjured him to deliver Rome from a detested tyrant; and, without regarding the timid remonstrances of his council, he resolved to prevent the enemy, and to carry the war into the heart of Italy.[59]

Preparations

The enterprise was as full of danger as of glory; and the unsuccessful event of two former invasions was sufficient to inspire the most serious apprehensions. The veteran troops, who revered the name of Maximian, had embraced in both those wars the party of his son, and were now restrained by a sense of

[57] After the victory of Constantine, it was universally allowed that the motive of delivering the republic from a detested tyrant would, at any time, have justified his expedition into Italy. Euseb. in Vit. Constantin. l. i. c. 26. Panegyr. Vet. ix. 2.

[58] Zosimus, l. ii. p. 84, 85 [14]. Nazarius in Panegyr. x. 7-13.

[59] See Panegyr. Vet. ix. 2. Omnibus fere tuis Comitibus et Ducibus non solum tacite mussantibus, sed etiam aperte timentibus; contra consilia hominum, contra Haruspicum monita, ipse per temet liberandæ urbis tempus venisse sentires. The embassy of the Romans is mentioned only by Zonaras (l. xiii. [1]) and by Cedrenus (in Compend. Hist. p. 270 [i. p. 474, ed. Bonn]): but those modern Greeks had the opportunity of consulting many writers which have since been lost, among which we may reckon the life of Constantine by Praxagoras. Photius (p. 63) has made a short extract from that historical work.

honour, as well as of interest, from entertaining an idea of a second desertion. Maxentius, who considered the Prætorian guards as the firmest defence of his throne, had increased them to their ancient establishment; and they composed, including the rest of the Italians who were inlisted into his service, a formidable body of fourscore thousand men. Forty thousand Moors and Carthaginians had been raised since the reduction of Africa. Even Sicily furnished its proportion of troops; and the army of Maxentius amounted to one hundred and seventy thousand foot and eighteen thousand horse. The wealth of Italy supplied the expenses of the war; and the adjacent provinces were exhausted to form immense magazines of corn and every other kind of provisions. The whole force of Constantine consisted of ninety thousand foot and eight thousand horse;[60] and, as the defence of the Rhine required an extraordinary attention during the absence of the emperor, it was not in his power to employ above half his troops in the Italian expedition, unless he sacrificed the public safety to his private quarrel.[61] At the head of about forty thousand soldiers, he marched to encounter an enemy whose numbers were at least four times superior to his own.[62] But the armies of Rome, placed at a secure distance from danger, were enervated by indulgence and luxury. Habituated to the baths and theatres of Rome, they took the field with reluctance, and were chiefly composed of veterans who had almost forgotten, or of new levies who had never acquired, the use of arms and the practice of war. The hardy legions of Gaul had long defended the frontiers of the empire against the barbarians of the North; and in the performance of that laborious service their valour was exercised and their discipline confirmed. There appeared the same difference between the leaders as between the armies. Caprice or flattery had tempted Maxentius with the hopes of conquest; but these aspiring hopes soon gave way to the habits of pleasure and the consciousness of his inexperience. The intrepid mind

[60] Zosimus (l. ii. p. 86 [15]) has given us this curious account of the forces on both sides. He makes no mention of any naval armaments, though we are assured (Panegyr. Vet. ix. 25) that the war was carried on by sea as well as by land; and that the fleet of Constantine took possession of Sardinia, Corsica, and the ports of Italy.

[61] Panegyr. Vet. ix. 3. It is not surprising that the orator should diminish the numbers with which his sovereign achieved the conquest of Italy; but it appears somewhat singular, that he should esteem the tyrant's army at no more than 100,000 men.

[62] [*Twice superior* would probably be nearer the truth.]

of Constantine had been trained from his earliest youth to war, to action, and to military command.

When Hannibal marched from Gaul into Italy, he was obliged, first to discover, and then to open, a way over mountains, and through savage nations, that had never yielded a passage to a regular army.[63] The Alps were then guarded by nature, they are now fortified by art. Citadels, constructed with no less skill than labour and expense, command every avenue into the plain, and on that side render Italy almost inaccessible to the enemies of the King of Sardinia.[64] But in the course of the intermediate period, the generals who have attempted the passage have seldom experienced any difficulty or resistance. In the age of Constantine, the peasants of the mountains were civilized and obedient subjects; the country was plentifully stocked with provisions, and the stupendous highways which the Romans had carried over the Alps opened several communications between Gaul and Italy.[65] Constantine preferred the road of the Cottian Alps, or, as it is now called, of Mount Cenis,[66] and led his troops with such active diligence that he descended into the plain of Piedmont before the court of Maxentius had received any certain intelligence of his departure from the banks of the Rhine. The city of Susa, however, which is situated at the foot of Mount Cenis, was surrounded with walls, and provided with a garrison sufficiently numerous to check the progress of an invader; but the impatience of Constantine's troops disdained the tedious forms of a siege. The same day that they appeared before Susa, they applied fire to the gates and ladders to the walls; and, mounting to the assault amidst a shower of stones and arrows, they entered the place sword in hand, and cut in pieces the greatest part of the garrison. The flames were extinguished by the care of Constantine, and the remains of Susa preserved from total destruction. About forty miles from thence, a more severe contest awaited him. A

Constantine passes the Alps [Sept.]

Battle of Turin

[63] The three principal passages of the Alps between Gaul and Italy are those of Mount St. Bernard, Mount Cenis, and Mount Genevre. Tradition, and a resemblance of names (*Alpes Penninæ*), had assigned the first of these for the march of Hannibal (see Simler de Alpibus). The Chevalier de Folard (Polybe, tom. iv.) and M. d'Anville have led him over Mount Genevre. But, notwithstanding the authority of an experienced officer and a learned geographer, the pretensions of Mount Cenis are supported in a specious, not to say a convincing manner, by M. Grosley, Observations sur l'Italie, tom. i. p. 40, &c.

[64] La Brunette near Suse, Demont, Exiles, Fenestrelles, Coni, &c.

[65] See Ammian. Marcellin. xv. 10. His description of the roads over the Alps is clear, lively, and accurate.

[66] [This is not certain; some think, Mount Génèvre.]

numerous army of Italians was assembled, under the lieutenants of Maxentius, in the plains of Turin. Its principal strength consisted in a species of heavy cavalry, which the Romans, since the decline of their discipline, had borrowed from the nations of the East. The horses, as well as the men, were clothed in complete armour, the joints of which were artfully adapted to the motions of their bodies. The aspect of this cavalry was formidable, their weight almost irresistible; and, as, on this occasion, their generals had drawn them up in a compact column or wedge, with a sharp point, and with spreading flanks, they flattered themselves that they should easily break and trample down the army of Constantine. They might, perhaps, have succeeded in their design, had not their experienced adversary embraced the same method of defence which in similar circumstances had been practised by Aurelian. The skilful evolutions of Constantine divided and baffled this massy column of cavalry. The troops of Maxentius fled in confusion towards Turin; and, as the gates of the city were shut against them, very few escaped the sword of the victorious pursuers. By this important service Turin deserved to experience the clemency and even favour of the conqueror. He made his entry into the Imperial palace of Milan, and almost all the cities of Italy between the Alps and the Po not only acknowledged the power, but embraced with zeal the party, of Constantine.[67]

Siege and battle of Verona [Oct.]

From Milan to Rome, the Æmilian and Flaminian highways offered an easy march of about four hundred miles; but, though Constantine was impatient to encounter the tyrant, he prudently directed his operations against another army of Italians, who, by their strength and position, might either oppose his progress, or, in case of a misfortune, might intercept his retreat. Ruricius Pompeianus, a general distinguished by his valour and ability, had under his command the city of Verona, and all the troops that were stationed in the province of Venetia. As soon as he was informed that Constantine was advancing towards him, he detached a large body of cavalry, which was defeated in an engagement near Brescia, and pursued by the Gallic legions as far as the gates of Verona. The necessity, the importance, and the difficulties of the siege of Verona immediately presented themselves to the sagacious mind of Constantine.[68] The city

[67] Zosimus as well as Eusebius hasten from the passage of the Alps to the decisive action near Rome. We must apply to the two Panegyrics for the intermediate actions of Constantine.

[68] The Marquis Maffei has examined the siege and battle of Verona with that

was accessible only by a narrow peninsula towards the west, as the other three sides were surrounded by the Adige, a rapid river which covered the province of Venetia, from whence the besieged derived an inexhaustible supply of men and provisions. It was not without great difficulty, and after several fruitless attempts, that Constantine found means to pass the river, at some distance above the city, and in a place where the torrent was less violent. He then encompassed Verona with strong lines, pushed his attacks with prudent vigour, and repelled a desperate sally of Pompeianus. That intrepid general, when he had used every means of defence that the strength of the place or that of the garrison could afford, secretly escaped from Verona, anxious not for his own but for the public safety. With indefatigable diligence he soon collected an army sufficient either to meet Constantine in the field, or to attack him if he obstinately remained within his lines. The emperor, attentive to the motions, and informed of the approach, of so formidable an enemy, left a part of his legions to continue the operations of the siege, whilst, at the head of those troops on whose valour and fidelity he more particularly depended, he advanced in person to engage the general of Maxentius. The army of Gaul was drawn up in two lines, according to the usual practice of war; but their experienced leader, perceiving that the numbers of the Italians far exceeded his own, suddenly changed his disposition, and, reducing the second, extended the front of his first, line to a just proportion with that of the enemy. Such evolutions, which only veteran troops can execute without confusion in a moment of danger, commonly prove decisive: but, as this engagement began towards the close of the day, and was contested with great obstinacy during the whole night, there was less room for the conduct of the generals than for the courage of the soldiers. The return of light displayed the victory of Constantine, and a field of carnage, covered with many thousands of the vanquished Italians. Their general, Pompeianus, was found among the slain; Verona immediately surrendered at discretion, and the garrison was made prisoners of war.[69] When

degree of attention and accuracy which was due to a memorable action that happened in his native country. The fortifications of that city, constructed by Gallienus, were less extensive than the modern walls, and the Amphitheatre was not included within their circumference. See Verona Illustrata, Part i. p. 142, 150.

[69] They wanted chains for so great a multitude of captives; and the whole council was at a loss; but the sagacious conqueror imagined the happy expedient of converting into fetters the swords of the vanquished. Panegyr. Vet. ix. 11.

the officers of the victorious army congratulated their master on this important success, they ventured to add some respectful complaints, of such a nature, however, as the most jealous monarchs will listen to without displeasure. They represented to Constantine that, not contented with performing all the duties of a commander, he had exposed his own person with an excess of valour which almost degenerated into rashness; and they conjured him for the future to pay more regard to the preservation of a life in which the safety of Rome and of the empire was involved.[70]

Indolence and fears of Maxentius

While Constantine signalized his conduct and valour in the field, the sovereign of Italy appeared insensible of the calamities and danger of a civil war which raged in the heart of his dominions. Pleasure was still the only business of Maxentius. Concealing, or at least attempting to conceal, from the public knowledge the misfortunes of his arms,[71] he indulged himself in vain confidence which deferred the remedies of the approaching evil, without deferring the evil itself.[72] The rapid progress of Constantine [73] was scarcely sufficient to awaken him from this fatal security; he flattered himself that his well-known liberality, and the majesty of the Roman name, which had already delivered him from two invasions, would dissipate with the same facility the rebellious army of Gaul. The officers of experience and ability who had served under the banners of Maximian were at length compelled to inform his effeminate son of the imminent danger to which he was reduced; and, with a freedom that at once surprised and convinced him, to urge the necessity of preventing his ruin by a vigorous exertion of his remaining power. The resources of Maxentius, both of men and money, were still considerable. The Prætorian guards felt how strongly their own interest and safety were connected with his cause; and a third army was soon collected, more numerous than those which had been lost in the battles of Turin and Verona. It was far from the intention of the emperor to lead his troops in person. A stranger to the exercises of war, he trembled at the apprehension of so dangerous a contest; and, as fear is commonly

[70] Panegyr. Vet. ix. 10.

[71] Literas calamitatum suarum indices supprimebat. Panegyr. Vet. ix. 15.

[72] Remedia malorum potius quam mala differebat, is the fine censure which Tacitus passes on the supine indolence of Vitellius.

[73] The Marquis Maffei has made it extremely probable that Constantine was still at Verona, the 1st of September, A.D. 312, and that the memorable æra of the Indictions was dated from his conquest of the Cisalpine Gaul.

superstitious, he listened with melancholy attention to the rumours of omens and presages which seemed to menace his life and empire. Shame at length supplied the place of courage, and forced him to take the field. He was unable to sustain the contempt of the Roman people. The circus resounded with their indignant clamours, and they tumultuously besieged the gates of the palace, reproaching the pusillanimity of their indolent sovereign, and celebrating the heroic spirit of Constantine.[74] Before Maxentius left Rome, he consulted the Sibylline books. The guardians of these ancient oracles were as well versed in the arts of this world, as they were ignorant of the secrets of fate; and they returned him a very prudent answer, which might adapt itself to the event, and secure their reputation whatever should be the chance of arms.[75]

Victory of Constantine near Rome, A.D. 312, 28th [27th] Oct.

The celerity of Constantine's march has been compared to the rapid conquest of Italy by the first of the Cæsars; nor is the flattering parallel repugnant to the truth of history, since no more than fifty-eight days elapsed between the surrender of Verona and the final decision of the war. Constantine had always apprehended that the tyrant would obey the dictates of fear, and perhaps of prudence; and that, instead of risking his last hopes in a general engagement, he would shut himself up within the walls of Rome. His ample magazines secured him against the danger of famine; and, as the situation of Constantine admitted not of delay, he might have been reduced to the sad necessity of destroying with fire and sword the Imperial city, the noblest reward of his victory, and the deliverance of which had been the motive, or rather indeed the pretence, of the civil war.[76] It was with equal surprise and pleasure that, on his arrival at a place called Saxa Rubra, about nine miles from Rome,[77] he discovered the army of Maxentius prepared to give him battle.[78] Their long front filled a very spacious plain, and their deep array reached to the banks of the Tiber,

[74] See Panegyr. Vet. xi. 16 [*leg.* ix. 16]. Lactantius de M. P. c. 44.

[75] Illo die hostem Romanorum esse periturum. The vanquished prince became of course the enemy of Rome.

[76] See Panegyr. Vet. ix. 16, x. 27. The former of these orators magnifies the hoards of corn, which Maxentius had collected from Africa and the islands. And yet, if there is any truth in the scarcity mentioned by Eusebius (in Vit. Constantin. l. i. c. 36), the Imperial granaries must have been open only to the soldiers.

[77] Maxentius . . . tandem urbe in *Saxa Rubra*, millia ferme novem ægerrime progressus. Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 40]. See Cellarius Geograph. Antiq. tom. i. p. 463. Saxa Rubra was in the neighbourhood of the Cremera, a trifling rivulet, illustrated by the valour and glorious death of the three hundred Fabii.

[78] The post which Maxentius had taken, with the Tiber in his rear, is very clearly described by the two Panegyrists, ix. 16, x. 28.

which covered their rear, and forbade their retreat. We are informed, and we may believe, that Constantine disposed his troops with consummate skill, and that he chose for himself the post of honour and danger. Distinguished by the splendour of his arms, he charged in person the cavalry of his rival; and his irresistible attack determined the fortune of the day. The cavalry of Maxentius was principally composed either of unwieldy cuirassiers or of light Moors and Numidians. They yielded to the vigour of the Gallic horse, which possessed more activity than the one, more firmness than the other. The defeat of the two wings left the infantry without any protection on its flanks, and the undisciplined Italians fled without reluctance from the standard of a tyrant whom they had always hated, and whom they no longer feared. The Prætorians, conscious that their offences were beyond the reach of mercy, were animated by revenge and despair. Notwithstanding their repeated efforts, those brave veterans were unable to recover the victory: they obtained, however, an honourable death; and it was observed that their bodies covered the same ground which had been occupied by their ranks.[79] The confusion then became general, and the dismayed troops of Maxentius, pursued by an implacable enemy, rushed by thousands into the deep and rapid stream of the Tiber. The emperor himself attempted to escape back into the city over the Milvian bridge, but the crowds which pressed together through that narrow passage forced him into the river, where he was immediately drowned by the weight of his armour.[80] His body, which had sunk very deep into the mud, was found with some difficulty the next day. The sight of his head, when it was exposed to the eyes of the people, convinced them of their deliverance, and admonished them to receive with acclamations of loyalty and gratitude the fortunate Constantine, who thus achieved by his valour and ability the most splendid enterprise of his life.[81]

[79] Exceptis latrocinii illius primis auctoribus, qui, desperatâ veniâ, locum quem pugnæ sumpserant texere corporibus. Panegyr. Vet. ix. 17.

[80] A very idle rumour soon prevailed, that Maxentius, who had not taken any precaution for his own retreat, had contrived a very artful snare to destroy the army of the pursuers; but that the wooden bridge, which was to have been loosened on the approach of Constantine, unluckily broke down under the weight of the flying Italians. M. de Tillemont (Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv. part i. p. 576) very seriously examines whether, in contradiction to common sense, the testimony of Eusebius and Zosimus ought to prevail over the silence of Lactantius, Nazarius, and the anonymous, but contemporary orator, who composed the ninth Panegyric.

[81] Zosimus, l. ii. p. 86-88 [15-17], and the two Panegyrics, the former of which was pronounced a few months afterwards, afford the clearest notion of this great battle. Lactantius, Eusebius, and even the Epitomes, supply several useful hints.

In the use of victory, Constantine neither deserved the praise of clemency, nor incurred the censure of immoderate rigour.[82] He inflicted the same treatment to which a defeat would have exposed his own person and family, put to death the two sons of the tyrant, and carefully extirpated his whole race. The most distinguished adherents of Maxentius must have expected to share his fate, as they had shared his prosperity and his crimes: but, when the Roman people loudly demanded a greater number of victims, the conqueror resisted, with firmness and humanity, those servile clamours which were dictated by flattery as well as by resentment. Informers were punished and discouraged; the innocent who had suffered under the late tyranny were recalled from exile, and restored to their estates. A general act of oblivion quieted the minds and settled the property of the people, both in Italy and in Africa.[83] The first time that Constantine honoured the senate with his presence, he recapitulated his own services and exploits in a modest oration, assured that illustrious order of his sincere regard, and promised to re-establish its ancient dignity and privileges. The grateful senate repaid these unmeaning professions by the empty titles of honour, which it was yet in their power to bestow; and, without presuming to ratify the authority of Constantine, they passed a decree to assign him the first rank among the three *Augusti* who governed the Roman world.[84] Games and festivals were instituted to preserve the fame of his victory, and several edifices, raised at the expense of Maxentius, were dedicated to the honour of his successful rival. The triumphal arch of Constantine still remains a melancholy proof of the decline of the arts, and a singular testimony of the meanest vanity. As it was not possible to find in the capital of the empire a sculptor who was capable of adorning that public monument, the arch of Trajan, without any respect either for his memory or for the rules of propriety, was stripped of its most elegant figures. The difference of times and persons, of actions and characters, was totally disregarded. The Parthian captives

His reception

[82] Zosimus, the enemy of Constantine, allows (l. ii. p. 88 [17]) that only a few of the friends of Maxentius were put to death, but we may remark the expressive passage of Nazarius (Panegyr. Vet. x. 6): Omnibus qui labefactare statum ejus poterant cum stirpe deletis. The other orator (Panegyr. Vet. ix. 20, 21) contents himself with observing that Constantine, when he entered Rome, did not imitate the cruel massacres of Cinna, of Marius, or of Sylla.

[83] See the two Panegyrics, and the laws of this and the ensuing year, in the Theodosian Code.

[84] Panegyr. Vet. ix. 20. Lactantius de M. P. c. 44. Maximin, who was confessedly the eldest Cæsar, claimed, with some show of reason, the first rank among the Augusti.

appear prostrate at the feet of a prince who never carried his arms beyond the Euphrates; and curious antiquarians can still discover the head of Trajan on the trophies of Constantine. The new ornaments which it was necessary to introduce between the vacancies of ancient sculpture are executed in the rudest and most unskilful manner.[85]

and conduct at Rome

The final abolition of the Prætorian guards was a measure of prudence as well as of revenge. Those haughty troops, whose numbers and privileges had been restored, and even augmented, by Maxentius, were for ever suppressed by Constantine. Their fortified camp was destroyed, and the few Prætorians who had escaped the fury of the sword were dispersed among the legions, and banished to the frontiers of the empire, where they might be serviceable without again becoming dangerous.[86] By suppressing the troops which were usually stationed in Rome, Constantine gave the fatal blow to the dignity of the senate and people, and the disarmed capital was exposed without protection to the insults or neglect of its distant master. We may observe that, in this last effort to preserve their expiring freedom, the Romans, from the apprehension of a tribute, had raised Maxentius to the throne. He exacted that tribute from the senate, under the name of a free gift. They implored the assistance of Constantine. He vanquished the tyrant, and converted the free gift into a perpetual tax. The senators, according to the declaration which was required of their property, were divided into several classes. The most opulent paid annually eight pounds of gold,[87] the next class paid four, the last two, and those whose poverty might have claimed an exemption were assessed, however, at seven pieces of gold. Besides the regular members of the senate, their sons, their descendants, and even their relations, enjoyed the vain privileges, and supported the heavy burdens, of the senatorial order; nor will it any longer excite our surprise that Constantine should be attentive to in-

[85] Adhuc cuncta opera quæ magnifice construxerat, urbis fanum, atque basilicam, Flavii meritis patres sacravere. Aurelius Victor [ib.]. With regard to the theft of Trajan's trophies, consult Flaminius Vacca, apud Montfaucon, Diarium Italicum, p. 250, and l'Antiquité Expliquée of the latter, tom. iv. p. 171.

[86] Prætoriæ legiones ac subsidia factionibus aptiora quam urbi Romæ, sublata penitus; simul arma atque usus indumenti militaris. Aurelius Victor. Zosimus (l. II, p. 89 [17]) mentions this fact as an historian; and it is very pompously celebrated in the ninth Panegyric.

[87] [This senatorial tax was known as the *follis* (also *gleba*, or *descriptio*). The senator had further to pay an *aurum oblaticium* to the emperor on such festal occasions as the celebration of the Quinquennalia.]

crease the number of persons who were included under so useful a description.[88] After the defeat of Maxentius, the victorious emperor passed no more than two or three months in Rome, which he visited twice during the remainder of his life, to celebrate the solemn festivals of the tenth and of the twentieth years of his reign. Constantine was almost perpetually in motion, to exercise the legions, or to inspect the state of the provinces. Treves, Milan, Aquileia, Sirmium, Naissus and Thessalonica were the occasional places of his residence, till he founded A NEW ROME on the confines of Europe and Asia.[89]

His alliance with Licinius A.D. 313, March

Before Constantine marched into Italy, he had secured the friendship, or at least the neutrality, of Licinius, the Illyrian emperor. He had promised his sister Constantia in marriage to that prince; but the celebration of the nuptials was deferred till after the conclusion of the war; and the interview of the two emperors at Milan, which was appointed for that purpose, appeared to cement the union of their families and interests.[90] In the midst of the public festivity they were suddenly obliged to take leave of each other. An inroad of the Franks summoned Constantine to the Rhine, and the hostile approach of the sovereign of Asia demanded the immediate presence of Licinius. Maximin had been the secret ally of Maxentius, and, without being discouraged by his fate, he resolved to try the fortune of a civil war. He moved out of Syria towards the frontiers of Bithynia, in the depth of winter. The season was severe and tempestuous; great numbers of men as well as horses perished in the snow; and, as the roads were broken up by incessant rains, he was obliged to leave behind him a considerable part of the heavy baggage, which was unable to follow the rapidity of his forced marches. By this extraordinary effort of diligence, he arrived with a harassed but

War between Maximin and Licinius, A.D. 313

[88] Ex omnibus provinciis optimates viros Curiæ tuæ pigneraveris; ut Senatûs dignitas . . . ex totius Orbis flore consisteret. Nazarius in Panegyr. Vet. x. 35. The word *pigneraveris* might almost seem maliciously chosen. Concerning the senatorial tax, see Zosimus, l. ii. p. 115 [38], the second title of the sixth book of the Theodosian Code, with Godefroy's Commentary, and Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xxviii. p. 726.

[89] From the Theodosian Code, we may now begin to trace the motions of the emperors; but the dates both of time and place have frequently been altered by the carelessness of transcribers.

[90] Zosimus (l. ii. p. 89 [17]) observes that, before the war, the sister of Constantine had been betrothed to Licinius. According to the younger Victor, Diocletian was invited to the nuptials; but, having ventured to plead his age and infirmities, he received a second letter filled with reproaches for his supposed partiality to the cause of Maxentius and Maximin. [Epit. 39.]

formidable army on the banks of the Thracian Bosphorus, before the lieutenants of Licinius were apprized of his hostile intentions. Byzantium surrendered to the power of Maximin, after a siege of eleven days. He was detained some days under the walls of Heraclea; and he had no sooner taken possession of that city than he was alarmed by the intelligence that Licinius had pitched his camp at the distance of only eighteen miles. After a fruitless negotiation, in which the two princes attempted to seduce the fidelity of each other's adherents, they had recourse to arms. The emperor of the East commanded a disciplined and veteran army of above seventy thousand men, and Licinius, who had collected about thirty thousand Illyrians, was at first oppressed by the superiority of numbers. His military skill and the firmness of his troops restored the day, and obtained a decisive victory. The incredible speed which Maximin exerted in his flight is much more celebrated than his prowess in the battle. Twenty-four hours afterwards he was seen pale, trembling, and without his Imperial ornaments, at Nicomedia, one hundred and sixty miles from the place of his defeat. The wealth of Asia was yet unexhausted; and, though the flower of his veterans had fallen in the late action, he had still power, if he could obtain time, to draw very numerous levies from Syria and Egypt. But he survived his misfortune only three or four months. His death, which happened at Tarsus, was variously ascribed to despair, to poison, and to the divine justice. As Maximin was alike destitute of abilities and of virtue, he was lamented neither by the people nor by the soldiers. The provinces of the East, delivered from the terrors of civil war, cheerfully acknowledged the authority of Licinius.[91]

The defeat April 30

and death of the former, August

Cruelty of Licinius

The vanquished emperor left behind him two children, a boy of about eight, and a girl of about seven, years old. Their inoffensive age might have excited compassion; but the compassion of Licinius was a very feeble resource, nor did it restrain him from *extinguishing* the name and memory of his adversary. The death of Severianus will admit of less excuse, as it was dictated neither by revenge nor by policy. The conqueror had never received any injury from the father of that unhappy youth, and the short and obscure reign of Severus in a distant part of the empire was already forgotten. But the execution

[91] Zosimus mentions the defeat and death of Maximin as ordinary events; but Lactantius expatiates on them (de M. P. c. 45-50), ascribing them to the miraculous interposition of Heaven. Licinius at that time was one of the protectors of the church.

of Candidianus was an act of the blackest cruelty and ingratitude. He was the natural son of Galerius, the friend and benefactor of Licinius. The prudent father had judged him too young to sustain the weight of a diadem; but he hoped that, under the protection of princes who were indebted to his favour for the Imperial purple, Candidianus might pass a secure and honourable life. He was now advancing towards the twentieth year of his age, and the royalty of his birth, though unsupported either by merit or ambition, was sufficient to exasperate the jealous mind of Licinius.[92] To these innocent and illustrious victims of his tyranny, we must add the wife and daughter of the emperor Diocletian. When that prince conferred on Galerius the title of Cæsar, he had given him in marriage his daughter Valeria, whose melancholy adventures might furnish a very singular subject for tragedy. She had fulfilled, and even surpassed, the duties of a wife. As she had not any children herself, she condescended to adopt the illegitimate son of her husband, and invariably displayed towards the unhappy Candidianus the tenderness and anxiety of a real mother. After the death of Galerius, her ample possessions provoked the avarice, and her personal attractions excited the desires, of his successor Maximin.[93] He had a wife still alive; but divorce was permitted by the Roman law, and the fierce passions of the tyrant demanded an immediate gratification. The answer of Valeria was such as became the daughter and widow of emperors; but it was tempered by the prudence which her defenceless condition compelled her to observe. She represented to the persons whom Maximin had employed on this occasion "that, even if honour could permit a woman of her character and dignity to entertain a thought of second nuptials, decency at least must forbid her to listen to his addresses at a time when the ashes of her husband and his benefactor were still warm, and while the sorrows of her mind were still expressed by her mourning garments. She ventured to declare that she could place very little confidence in the professions of a man,

Unfortunate fate of the empress Valeria and her mother

[92] Lactantius de M. P. c. 50. Aurelius Victor touches on the different conduct of Licinius, and of Constantine, in the use of victory.

[93] The sensual appetites of Maximin were gratified at the expense of his subjects. His eunuchs, who forced away wives and virgins, examined their naked charms with anxious curiosity, lest any part of their body should be found unworthy of the royal embraces. Coyness and disdain were considered as treason, and the obstinate fair one was condemned to be drowned. A custom was gradually introduced, that no person should marry a wife without the permission of the emperor, "ut ipse in omnibus nuptiis prægustator esset". Lactantius de M. P. c. 38.

whose cruel inconstancy was capable of repudiating a faithful and affectionate wife." [94] On this repulse, the love of Maximin was converted into fury; and, as witnesses and judges were always at his disposal, it was easy for him to cover his fury with an appearance of legal proceedings, and to assault the reputation as well as the happiness of Valeria. Her estates were confiscated, her eunuchs and domestics devoted to the most inhuman tortures, and several innocent and respectable matrons, who were honoured with her friendship, suffered death on a false accusation of adultery. The empress herself, together with her mother Prisca, was condemned to exile; and, as they were ignominiously hurried from place to place before they were confined to a sequestered village in the deserts of Syria, they exposed their shame and distress to the provinces of the East, which, during thirty years, had respected their august dignity. Diocletian made several ineffectual efforts to alleviate the misfortunes of his daughter; and, as the last return that he expected for the Imperial purple, which he had conferred upon Maximin, he entreated that Valeria might be permitted to share his retirement of Salona, and to close the eyes of her afflicted father.[95] He entreated, but, as he could no longer threaten, his prayers were received with coldness and disdain; and the pride of Maximin was gratified in treating Diocletian as a suppliant, and his daughter as a criminal. The death of Maximin seemed to assure the empresses of a favourable alteration in their fortune. The public disorders relaxed the vigilance of their guard, and they easily found means to escape from the place of their exile, and to repair, though with some precaution, and in disguise, to the court of Licinius. His behaviour, in the first days of his reign, and the honourable reception which he gave to young Candidianus, inspired Valeria with a secret satisfaction, both on her own account, and on that of her adopted son. But these grateful prospects were soon succeeded by horror and astonishment; and the bloody executions which stained the palace of Nicomedia sufficiently convinced her that the throne of Maximin was filled by a tyrant more inhuman than himself. Valeria consulted her safety by a hasty flight, and, still accompanied by her mother Prisca, they wandered

[94] Lactantius de M. P. c. 39.

[95] Diocletian at last sent cognatum suum, quendam militarem ac potentem virum, to intercede in favour of his daughter (Lactantius de M. P. c. 41). We are not sufficiently acquainted with the history of these times, to point out the person who was employed.

above fifteen months[96] through the provinces, concealed in the disguise of plebeian habits. They were at length discovered at Thessalonica; and, as the sentence of their death was already pronounced, they were immediately beheaded, and their bodies thrown into the sea. The people gazed on the melancholy spectacle; but their grief and indignation were suppressed by the terrors of a military guard. Such was the unworthy fate of the wife and daughter of Diocletian. We lament their misfortunes, we cannot discover their crimes; and, whatever idea we may justly entertain of the cruelty of Licinius, it remains a matter of surprise that he was not contented with some more secret and decent method of revenge.[97]

Quarrel between Constantine and Licinius, A.D. 314

The Roman world was now divided between Constantine and Licinius, the former of whom was master of the West, and the latter of the East. It might perhaps have been expected that the conquerors, fatigued with civil war, and connected by a private as well as public alliance, would have renounced, or at least would have suspended, any farther designs of ambition. And yet a year had scarcely elapsed after the death of Maximin, before the victorious emperors turned their arms against each other. The genius, the success, and the aspiring temper of Constantine may seem to mark him out as the aggressor; but the perfidious character of Licinius justifies the most unfavourable suspicions, and by the faint light which history reflects on this transaction[98] we may discover a conspiracy fomented by his arts against the authority of his colleague. Constantine had lately given his sister Anastasia in marriage to Bassianus, a man of a considerable family and fortune, and had elevated his new kinsman to the rank of Cæsar. According to the system of government instituted by Diocletian, Italy, and perhaps Africa, were designed for his department in the empire. But the performance of the promised favour was either attended with so much delay, or accompanied with so many unequal conditions,

[96] Valeria quoque per varias provincias quindecim mensibus plebeio cultû pervagata. Lactantius de M. P. c. 51. There is some doubt whether we should compute the fifteen months from the moment of her exile, or from that of her escape. The expression of *pervagata* seems to denote the latter; but in that case we must suppose that the treatise of Lactantius was written after the first civil war between Licinius and Constantine. See Cuper, p. 254.

[97] Ita illis pudicitia et conditio exitio fuit. Lactantius de M. P. c. 51. He relates the misfortunes of the innocent wife and daughter of Diocletian with a very natural mixture of pity and exultation.

[98] The curious reader, who consults the Valesian Fragment, p. 713, will perhaps accuse me of giving a bold and licentious paraphrase; but, if he considers it with attention, he will acknowledge that my interpretation is probable and consistent.

that the fidelity of Bassianus was alienated rather than secured by the honourable distinction which he had obtained. His nomination had been ratified by the consent of Licinius, and that artful prince, by the means of his emissaries, soon contrived to enter into a secret and dangerous correspondence with the new Cæsar, to irritate his discontents, and to urge him to the rash enterprise of extorting by violence what he might in vain solicit from the justice of Constantine. But the vigilant emperor discovered the conspiracy before it was ripe for execution; and, after solemnly renouncing the alliance of Bassianus, despoiled him of the purple and inflicted the deserved punishment on his treason and ingratitude. The haughty refusal of Licinius, when he was required to deliver up the criminals who had taken refuge in his dominions, confirmed the suspicions already entertained of his perfidy; and the indignities offered at Æmona, on the frontiers of Italy, to the statues of Constantine, became the signal of discord between the two princes.[99]

First civil war between them. Battle of Cibalis, A.D. 315 [314], 8th Octob.

The first battle was fought near Cibalis, a city of Pannonia, situated on the river Save, about fifty miles above Sirmium.[100] From the inconsiderable forces which in this important contest two such powerful monarchs brought into the field, it may be inferred that the one was suddenly provoked, and that the other was unexpectedly surprised. The emperor of the West had only twenty thousand, and the sovereign of the East no more than five and thirty thousand, men. The inferiority of number was, however, compensated by the advantage of the ground. Constantine had taken post in a defile about half a mile in breadth, between a steep hill and a deep morass; and in that situation he steadily expected and repulsed the first attack of the enemy. He pursued his success, and advanced into the plain. But the veteran legions of Illyricum rallied under the standard of a leader who had been trained to arms in the school of Probus and Diocletian. The missile weapons on both sides were soon exhausted; the two armies, with equal valour, rushed to a closer engagement of swords and spears, and

[99] The situation of Æmona, or as it is now called Laybach, in Carniola (d'Anville, Géographie Ancienne, tom. i. p. 187), may suggest a conjecture. As it lay to the north-east of the Julian Alps, that important territory became a natural object of dispute between the sovereigns of Italy and of Illyricum.

[100] Cibalis or Cibalæ [now Vinkovce] (whose name is still preserved in the obscure ruins of Swilei) was situated about fifty miles from Sirmium, the capital of Illyricum, and about one hundred from Taurunum, or Belgrade, and the conflux of the Danube and the Save. The Roman garrisons and cities on those rivers are finely illustrated by M. d'Anville, in a memoir inserted in l'Académie des Inscriptions tom. xxviii.

the doubtful contest had already lasted from the dawn of day to a late hour of the evening when the right wing, which Constantine led in person, made a vigorous and decisive charge. The judicious retreat of Licinius saved the remainder of his troops from a total defeat; but, when he computed his loss, which amounted to more than twenty thousand men, he thought it unsafe to pass the night in the presence of an active and victorious enemy. Abandoning his camp and magazines, he marched away with secrecy and diligence at the head of the greatest part of his cavalry, and was soon removed beyond the danger of a pursuit. His diligence preserved his wife, his son, and his treasures, which he had deposited at Sirmium. Licinius passed through that city, and, breaking down the bridge on the Save, hastened to collect a new army in Dacia and Thrace. In his flight he bestowed the precarious title of Cæsar on Valens, his general of the Illyrian frontier.[101]

Battle of Mardia

The plain of Mardia in Thrace was the theatre of a second battle no less obstinate and bloody than the former. The troops on both sides displayed the same valour and discipline; and the victory was once more decided by the superior abilities of Constantine, who directed a body of five thousand men to gain an advantageous height, from whence, during the heat of the action, they attacked the rear of the enemy, and made a very considerable slaughter. The troops of Licinius, however, presenting a double front, still maintained their ground, till the approach of night put an end to the combat, and secured their retreat towards the mountains of Macedonia.[102] The loss of two battles, and of his bravest veterans, reduced the fierce spirit of Licinius to sue for peace. His ambassador, Mistrianus, was admitted to the audience of Constantine; he expatiated on the common topics of moderation and humanity, which are so familiar to the eloquence of the vanquished; represented, in the most insinuating language, that the event of the war was still doubtful, whilst its inevitable calamities were alike pernicious to both the contending parties; and declared that he was authorized to propose a lasting and honourable peace in the name of the *two* emperors his masters. Constantine received the mention of Valens with indignation and contempt. "It

[101] Zosimus (l. ii. p. 90, 91 [18]) gives a very particular account of this battle; but the descriptions of Zosimus are rhetorical rather than military.

[102] Zosimus, l. ii. p. 92, 93 [19]. Anonym. Valesian. p. 713 [5; 17, 18]. The Epitomes furnish some circumstances; but they frequently confound the two wars between Licinius and Constantine.

was not for such a purpose," he sternly replied, "that we have advanced from the shores of the western ocean in an uninterrupted course of combats and victories, that, after rejecting an ungrateful kinsman, we should accept for our colleague a contemptible slave. The abdication of Valens is the first article of the treaty."[103] It was necessary to accept this humiliating condition, and the unhappy Valens, after a reign of a few days, was deprived of the purple and of his life. As soon as the obstacle was removed, the tranquillity of the Roman world was easily restored. The successive defeats of Licinius had ruined his forces, but they had displayed his courage and abilities. His situation was almost desperate, but the efforts of despair are sometimes formidable; and the good sense of Constantine preferred a great and certain advantage to a third trial of the chance of arms. He consented to leave his rival, or, as he again styled Licinius, his friend and brother, in the possession of Thrace, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt; but the provinces of Pannonia, Dalmatia, Dacia, Macedonia, and Greece, were yielded to the western empire, and the dominions of Constantine now extended from the confines of Caledonia to the extremity of Peloponnesus. It was stipulated by the same treaty that three royal youths, the sons of the emperors, should be called to the hopes of the succession. Crispus and the younger Constantine were soon afterwards declared Cæsars in the West, while the younger Licinius was invested with the same dignity in the East. In this double proportion of honours, the conqueror asserted the superiority of his arms and power.[104]

Treaty of peace, December

General peace and laws of Constantine, A.D. 315-323

The reconciliation of Constantine and Licinius, though it was embittered by resentment and jealousy, by the remembrance of recent injuries, and by the apprehension of future dangers, maintained, however, above eight years, the tranquillity of the

[103] Petrus Patricius in the Excerpt. Legat. p. 27 [F.G.H. iv. p. 190]. If it should be thought that γάμβρος signifies more properly a son-in-law we might conjecture, that Constantine, assuming the name as well as the duties of a father, had adopted his younger brothers and sisters, the children of Theodora. But in the best authors γάμβρος sometimes signifies a husband, sometimes a father-in-law, and sometimes a kinsman in general. See Spanheim Observat. ad Julian. Orat. i. p. 72.

[104] Zosimus, l. ii. p. 93 [20]. Anonym. Valesian. p. 713. Eutropius, x. 5. Aurelius Victor. Euseb. in Chron. Sozomen. l. i. c. 2. Four of these writers affirm that the promotion of the Cæsars was an article of the treaty. It is however certain that the younger Constantine and Licinius were not yet born; and it is highly probable that the promotion was made the 1st of March, A.D. 317. The treaty had probably stipulated that two Cæsars might be created by the western, and one only by the eastern, emperor; but each of them reserved to himself the choice of the persons.

Roman world. As a very regular series of the Imperial laws commences about this period, it would not be difficult to transcribe the civil regulations which employed the leisure of Constantine. But the most important of his institutions are intimately connected with the new system of policy and religion, which was not perfectly established till the last and peaceful years of his reign. There are many of his laws which, as far as they concern the rights and property of individuals, and the practice of the bar, are more properly referred to the private than to the public jurisprudence of the empire; and he published many edicts of so local and temporary a nature, that they would ill deserve the notice of a general history. Two laws, however, may be selected from the crowd; the one, for its importance, the other, for its singularity; the former for its remarkable benevolence, the latter for its excessive severity. 1. The horrid practice, so familiar to the ancients, of exposing or murdering their new-born infants, was become every day more frequent in the provinces, and especially in Italy. It was the effect of distress; and the distress was principally occasioned by the intolerable burden of taxes, and by the vexatious as well as cruel prosecutions of the officers of the revenue against their insolvent debtors. The less opulent or less industrious part of mankind, instead of rejoicing in an increase of family, deemed it an act of paternal tenderness to release their children from the impending miseries of a life which they themselves were unable to support. The humanity of Constantine, moved, perhaps, by some recent and extraordinary instances of despair, engaged him to address an edict to all the cities of Italy, and afterwards of Africa, directing immediate and sufficient relief to be given to those parents who should produce, before the magistrates, the children whom their own poverty would not allow them to educate. But the promise was too liberal, and the provision too vague, to effect any general or permanent benefit.[105] The law, though it may merit some praise, served rather to display than to alleviate the public distress. It still remains an authentic monument to contradict and confound those venal orators, who were too well satisfied with their own situation to discover either vice or misery under the government of a generous sovereign.[106] 2.

[105] Codex Theodosian. l. xi. tit. 27. tom. iv. p. 188, with Godefroy's observations. See likewise, l. v. tit. 7-8.

[106] Omnia foris placita, domi prospera, annonæ ubertate, fructuum copiâ, &c. Panegyr. Vet. x. 38. This oration of Nazarius was pronounced on the day of the Quinquennalia of the Cæsars, the 1st of March, A.D. 321.

The laws of Constantine against rapes were dictated with very little indulgence for the most amiable weaknesses of human nature; since the description of that crime was applied not only to the brutal violence which compelled, but even to the gentle seduction which might persuade, an unmarried woman, under the age of twenty-five, to leave the house of her parents. "The successful ravisher was punished with death; and, as if simple death was inadequate to the enormity of his guilt, he was either burnt alive or torn in pieces by wild beasts in the amphitheatre. The virgin's declaration that she had been carried away with her own consent, instead of saving her lover, exposed her to share his fate. The duty of a public prosecution was intrusted to the parents of the guilty or unfortunate maid; and, if the sentiments of Nature prevailed on them to dissemble the injury, and to repair by a subsequent marriage the honour of their family, they were themselves punished by exile and confiscation. The slaves, whether male or female, who were convicted of having been accessary to the rape or seduction, were burnt alive, or put to death by the ingenious torture of pouring down their throats a quantity of melted lead. As the crime was of a public kind, the accusation was permitted even to strangers. The commencement of the action was not limited to any term of years, and the consequences of the sentence were extended to the innocent offspring of such an irregular union." [107] But, whenever the offence inspires less horror than the punishment, the rigour of penal law is obliged to give way to the common feelings of mankind. The most odious parts of this edict were softened or repealed in the subsequent reigns; [108] and even Constantine himself very frequently alleviated, by partial acts of mercy, the stern temper of his general institutions. Such, indeed, was the singular humour of that emperor, who showed himself as indulgent, and even remiss, in the execution of his laws, as he was severe, and even cruel, in the enacting of them. It is scarcely possible to observe a more decisive symptom of weakness, either in the character of the prince, or in the constitution of the government. [109]

[107] See the edict of Constantine, addressed to the Roman people in the Theodosian Code, l. ix. tit. 24, tom. iii. p. 189. [Date: A.D. 320, April 1, Aquileia.]

[108] His son very fairly assigns the true reason of the repeal: "Ne sub specie atrocioris judicii aliqua in ulciscendo crimine dilatio nasceretur". Cod. Theod. tom. iii. p. 193.

[109] Eusebius (in Vitâ Constant. l. iii. c. 1) chooses to affirm that in the reign of his hero the sword of justice hung idle in the hands of the magistrates. Eusebius himself (l. iv. c. 29, 54) and the Theodosian Code will inform us that this excessive lenity was not owing to the want either of atrocious criminals or of penal laws.

The civil administration was sometimes interrupted by the military defence of the empire. Crispus, a youth of the most amiable character, who had received with the title of Cæsar the command of the Rhine, distinguished his conduct, as well as valour, in several victories over the Franks and Alemanni; and taught the barbarians of that frontier to dread the eldest son of Constantine, and the grandson of Constantius.[110] The emperor himself had assumed the more difficult and important province of the Danube. The Goths, who in the time of Claudius and Aurelian had felt the weight of the Roman arms, respected the power of the empire, even in the midst of its intestine divisions. But the strength of that warlike nation was now restored by a peace of near fifty years; a new generation had arisen, who no longer remembered the misfortunes of ancient days: the Sarmatians of the lake Mæotis followed the Gothic standard, either as subjects or as allies, and their united force was poured upon the countries of Illyricum. Campona, Margus, and Bononia, appear to have been the scenes of several memorable sieges and battles;[111] and, though Constantine encountered a very obstinate resistance, he prevailed at length in the contest, and the Goths were compelled to purchase an ignominious retreat by restoring the booty and prisoners which they had taken. Nor was this advantage sufficient to satisfy the indignation of the emperor. He resolved to chastise as well as to repulse the insolent barbarians who had dared to invade the territories of Rome. At the head of the legions he passed the Danube, after repairing the bridge which had been constructed by Trajan, penetrated into the strongest recesses of Dacia,[112] and, when he had inflicted a severe revenge, condescended to give peace to the suppliant Goths, on condition that, as often as they were required, they should supply his armies with a body of forty thousand soldiers.[113]

The Gothic war, A.D. 322

[110] Nazarius in Panegyr. Vet. x. [36]. The victory of Crispus over the Alemanni is expressed on some medals.

[111] See Zosimus, l. ii. p. 93, 94 [21]; though the narrative of that historian is neither clear nor consistent. The Panegyric of Optatianus (c. 23 [in Epigr. Vet. 1596, p. 355]) mentions the alliance of the Sarmatians with the Carpi and Getæ, and points out the several fields of battle. It is supposed that the Sarmatian games, celebrated in the month of November, derived their origin from the success of this war [and also the ludi Gothici, 9th February: *Corp. Inscr. Lat.* i. p. 386].

[112] In the Cæsars of Julian (p. 329. Commentaire de Spanheim, p. 252.) Constantine boasts that he had recovered the province (Dacia), which Trajan had subdued. But it is insinuated by Silenus that the conquests of Constantine were like the gardens of Adonis, which fade and wither almost the moment they appear.

[113] Jornandes de Rebus Geticis, c. 21. I know not whether we may entirely depend on his authority. Such an alliance has a very recent air, and scarcely is suited to the maxims of the beginning of the fourth century.

Exploits like these were no doubt honourable to Constantine and beneficial to the state; but it may surely be questioned whether they can justify the exaggerated assertion of Eusebius, that ALL SCYTHIA, as far as the extremity of the North, divided as it was into so many names and nations of the most various and savage manners, had been added by his victorious arms to the Roman empire.[114]

Second civil war between Constantine and Licinius, A.D. 323

In this exalted state of glory it was impossible that Constantine should any longer endure a partner in the empire. Confiding in the superiority of his genius and military power, he determined, without any previous injury, to exert them for the destruction of Licinius, whose advanced age and unpopular vices seemed to offer a very easy conquest.[115] But the old emperor, awakened by the approaching danger, deceived the expectations of his friends as well as of his enemies. Calling forth that spirit and those abilities by which he had deserved the friendship of Galerius and the Imperial purple, he prepared himself for the contest, collected the forces of the East, and soon filled the plains of Hadrianople with his troops, and the Streights of the Hellespont with his fleet. The army consisted of one hundred and fifty thousand foot, and fifteen thousand horse; and, as the cavalry was drawn, for the most part, from Phrygia and Cappadocia, we may conceive a more favourable opinion of the beauty of the horses than of the courage and dexterity of their riders. The fleet was composed of three hundred and fifty galleys of three ranks of oars. An hundred and thirty of these were furnished by Egypt, and the adjacent coast of Africa. An hundred and ten sailed from the ports of Phœnicia and the isle of Cyprus; and the maritime countries of Bithynia, Ionia, and Caria were likewise obliged to provide an hundred and ten galleys. The troops of Constantine were ordered to rendezvous at Thessalonica; they amounted to above an hundred and twenty thousand horse and foot.[116] Their emperor was satisfied with their martial appearance, and his army contained more soldiers, though fewer men, than that of his eastern competitor. The legions of Constantine were levied in the war-like provinces

[114] Eusebius in Vit. Constantin. l. i. c. 8. This passage, however, is taken from a general declamation on the greatness of Constantine, and not from any particular account of the Gothic war.

[115] Constantinus tamen vir ingens, et omnia efficere nitens quæ animo præparasset simul principatum totius orbis affectans, Licinio bellum intulit. Eutropius, x. 5. Zosimus, l. ii. p. 89 [18]. The reasons which they have assigned for the first civil war may, with more propriety, be applied to the second.

[116] Zosimus, l. ii. p. 94, 95 [22].

of Europe; action had confirmed their discipline, victory had elevated their hopes, and there were among them a great number of veterans, who, after seventeen glorious campaigns under the same leader, prepared themselves to deserve an honourable dismission by a last effort of their valour.[117] But the naval preparations of Constantine were in every respect much inferior to those of Licinius. The maritime cities of Greece sent their respective quotas of men and ships to the celebrated harbour of Piræus, and their united forces consisted of no more than two hundred small vessels: a very feeble armament, if it is compared with those formidable fleets which were equipped and maintained by the republic of Athens during the Peloponnesian war.[118] Since Italy was no longer the seat of government, the naval establishments of Misenum and Ravenna had been gradually neglected; and, as the shipping and mariners of the empire were supported by commerce rather than by war, it was natural that they should the most abound in the industrious provinces of Egypt and Asia. It is only surprising that the eastern emperor, who possessed so great a superiority at sea, should have neglected the opportunity of carrying an offensive war into the centre of his rival's dominions.

Battle of Hadrianople, A.D. 323, July 3

Instead of embracing such an active resolution, which might have changed the whole face of the war, the prudent Licinius expected the approach of his rival in a camp near Hadrianople, which he had fortified with an anxious care that betrayed his apprehension of the event. Constantine directed his march from Thessalonica towards that part of Thrace, till he found himself stopped by the broad and rapid stream of the Hebrus, and discovered the numerous army of Licinius, which filled the steep ascent of the hill, from the river to the city of Hadrianople. Many days were spent in doubtful and distant skirmishes; but at length the obstacles of the passage and of the attack were removed by the intrepid conduct of Constantine. In this place we might relate a wonderful exploit of Constantine, which, though it can scarce be paralleled either in poetry or romance,

[117] Constantine was very attentive to the privileges and comforts of his fellow-veterans (Conveterani), as he now began to style them. See the Theodosian Code, l. vii. tit 20, tom. ii. p. 419-429.

[118] Whilst the Athenians maintained the empire of the sea, their fleet consisted of three, and afterwards of four, hundred galleys of three ranks of oars, all completely equipped and ready for immediate service. The arsenal in the port of Piræus had cost the republic a thousand talents, about two hundred and sixteen thousand pounds. See Thucydides de Bel. Peloponn. l. ii. c. 13, and Meursius de Fortunâ Atticâ, c. 19.

is celebrated, not by a venal orator devoted to his fortune, but by an historian, the partial enemy of his fame. We are assured that the valiant emperor threw himself into the river Hebrus, accompanied only by *twelve* horsemen, and that, by the effort or terror of his invincible arm, he broke, slaughtered, and put to flight a host of an hundred and fifty thousand men. The credulity of Zosimus prevailed so strongly over his passion that, among the events of the memorable battle of Hadrianople, he seems to have selected and embellished, not the most important, but the most marvellous. The valour and danger of Constantine are attested by a slight wound which he received in the thigh; but it may be discovered even from an imperfect narration, and, perhaps, a corrupted text, that the victory was obtained no less by the conduct of the general than by the courage of the hero; that a body of five thousand archers marched round to occupy a thick wood in the rear of the enemy, whose attention was diverted by the construction of a bridge; and that Licinius, perplexed by so many artful evolutions, was reluctantly drawn from his advantageous post to combat on equal ground in the plain. The contest was no longer equal. His confused multitude of new levies was easily vanquished by the experienced veterans of the West. Thirty-four thousand men are reported to have been slain. The fortified camp of Licinius was taken by assault the evening of the battle; the greater part of the fugitives, who had retired to the mountains, surrendered themselves the next day to the discretion of the conqueror; and his rival, who could no longer keep the field, confined himself within the walls of Byzantium.[119]

Siege of Byzantium and naval victory of Crispus

The siege of Byzantium, which was immediately undertaken by Constantine, was attended with great labour and uncertainty. In the late civil wars, the fortifications of that place, so justly considered as the key of Europe and Asia, had been repaired and strengthened; and, as long as Licinius remained master of the sea, the garrison was much less exposed to the danger of famine than the army of the besiegers. The naval commanders of Constantine were summoned to his camp, and received his positive orders to force the passage of the Hellespont, as the fleet of Licinius, instead of seeking and destroying their feeble

[119] Zosimus, l. ii. p. 95, 96 [21 *sqq.*]. This great battle is described in the Valesian fragment (p. 714), in a clear though concise manner. "Licinius vero circum Hadrianopolin maximo exercitu latera ardui montis impleverat: illuc toto agmine Constantinus inflexit. Cum bellum terrâ marique traheretur, quamvis per arduum suis nitentibus, attamen disciplinâ militari et felicitate, Constantinus Licinii confusum et sine ordine agentem vicit exercitum; leviter femore sauciatus."

enemy, continued inactive in those narrow streights where its superiority of numbers was of little use or advantage. Crispus, the emperor's eldest son, was intrusted with the execution of this daring enterprise, which he performed with so much courage and success, that he deserved the esteem, and most probably excited the jealousy, of his father. The engagement lasted two days, and, in the evening of the first, the contending fleets, after a considerable and mutual loss, retired into their respective harbours of Europe and Asia. The second day about noon a strong south wind[120] sprang up, which carried the vessels of Crispus against the enemy; and, as the casual advantage was improved by his skilful intrepidity, he soon obtained a complete victory. An hundred and thirty vessels were destroyed, five thousand men were slain, and Amandus, the admiral of the Asiatic fleet, escaped with the utmost difficulty to the shores of Chalcedon. As soon as the Hellespont was open, a plentiful convoy of provisions flowed into the camp of Constantine, who had already advanced the operations of the siege. He constructed artificial mounds of earth of an equal height with the ramparts of Byzantium. The lofty towers which were erected on that foundation galled the besieged with large stones and darts from the military engines, and the battering rams had shaken the walls in several places. If Licinius persisted much longer in the defence, he exposed himself to be involved in the ruin of the place. Before he was surrounded, he prudently removed his person and treasures to Chalcedon in Asia; and, as he was always desirous of associating companions to the hopes and dangers of his fortune, he now bestowed the title of Cæsar on Martinianus, who exercised one of the most important offices of the empire.[121]

Battle of Chrysopolis [Sept. 18 or 20]

Such were still the resources, and such the abilities, of Licinius, that, after so many successive defeats, he collected in Bithynia a new army of fifty or sixty thousand men, while the activity of Constantine was employed in the siege of Byzantium. The vigilant emperor did not, however, neglect the last struggles of his antagonist. A considerable part of his victorious army was

[120] Zosimus, l. ii. p. 97, 98 [24]. The current always sets out of the Hellespont; and, when it is assisted by a north wind, no vessel can attempt the passage. A south wind renders the force of the current almost imperceptible. See Tournefort's Voyage au Levant, Let. xi.

[121] Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 41]. Zosimus, l. ii. p. 98 [25]. According to the latter, Martinianus was Magister Officiorum (he uses the Latin appellation in Greek). Some medals [struck at Nicomedia] seem to intimate that during his short reign he received the title of Augustus.

transported over the Bosphorus in small vessels, and the decisive engagement was fought soon after their landing on the heights of Chrysopolis, or, as it is now called, of Scutari. The troops of Licinius, though they were lately raised, ill armed, and worse disciplined, made head against their conquerors with fruitless but desperate valour, till a total defeat and the slaughter of five and twenty thousand men irretrievably determined the fate of their leader.[122] He retired to Nicomedia, rather with the view of gaining some time for negotiation than with the hope of any effectual defence. Constantia, his wife and the sister of Constantine, interceded with her brother in favour of her husband, and obtained from his policy, rather than from his compassion, a solemn promise, confirmed by an oath, that after the sacrifice of Martinianus, and the resignation of the purple, Licinius himself should be permitted to pass the remainder of his life in peace and affluence. The behaviour of Constantia, and her relation to the contending parties, naturally recalls the remembrance of that virtuous matron who was the sister of Augustus and the wife of Antony. But the temper of mankind was altered, and it was no longer esteemed infamous for a Roman to survive his honour and independence. Licinius solicited and accepted the pardon of his offences, laid himself and his purple at the feet of his *lord* and *master*, was raised from the ground with insulting pity, was admitted the same day to the Imperial banquet, and soon afterwards was sent away to Thessalonica, which had been chosen for the place of his confinement.[123] His confinement was soon terminated by death, and it is doubtful whether a tumult of the soldiers, or a decree of the senate, was suggested as the motive for his execution. According to the rules of tyranny, he was accused of forming a conspiracy, and of holding a treasonable correspondence with the barbarians; but, as he was never convicted, either by his own conduct or by any legal evidence, we may perhaps be allowed, from his weakness, to presume his innocence.[124] The memory of Licinius was

Submission and death of Licinius

[122] Eusebius (in Vitâ Constantin. l. ii. c. 16, 17) ascribes this decisive victory to the pious prayers of the emperor. The Valesian fragment (p. 714) mentions a body of Gothic auxiliaries, under their chief Aliquaca, who adhered to the party of Licinius.

[123] Zosimus, l. ii. p. 102 [28]. Victor Junior in Epitome [41]. Anonym. Valesian, p. 714.

[124] Contra religionem sacramenti Thessalonicæ privatus occisus est. Eutropius x. 6; and his evidence is confirmed by St. Jerome (in Chronic.) as well as by Zosimus, l. ii. p. 102 [28]. The Valesian writer is the only one who mentions the soldiers, and it is Zonaras alone [xiii. 1] who calls in the assistance of the senate. Eusebius prudently slides over this delicate transaction. But Sozomen, a century afterwards, ventures to assert the treasonable practices of Licinius.

branded with infamy, his statues were thrown down, and by a hasty edict, of such mischievous tendency that it was almost immediately corrected, all his laws, and all the judicial proceedings of his reign, were at once abolished.[125] By this victory of Constantine, the Roman world was again united under the authority of one emperor, thirty-seven years after Diocletian had divided his power and provinces with his associate Maximian. Re-union of the empire, A.D. 324

The successive steps of the elevation of Constantine, from his first assuming the purple at York to the resignation of Licinius at Nicomedia, have been related with some minuteness and precision, not only as the events are in themselves both interesting and important, but still more as they contributed to the decline of the empire by the expense of blood and treasure, and by the perpetual increase, as well of the taxes as of the military establishment. The foundation of Constantinople, and the establishment of the Christian religion, were the immediate and memorable consequences of this revolution.

[125] See the Theodosian Code, l. xv. tit. 15, tom. v. p. 404, 405. These edicts of Constantine betray a degree of passion and precipitancy very unbecoming of the character of a lawgiver.

END OF VOL. I.

APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL NOTES BY THE EDITOR

1. AUTHORITIES

Cassius Dio Cocceianus belonged to a good family of the Bithynian town of Nicæa. His father Apronianus had been intrusted with the governorships of Dalmatia and Cilicia, and he himself achieved a more distinguished career in the civil service. Arriving at Rome in the year in which the Emperor Marcus died (180), he advanced step by step to the prætorship (193), and subsequently held the office of consul twice (see lxxiii. 12; lxxx. 2; Corp. Insc. Lat. iii. 5587). He was prefect (ἐπεστάτησα, lxxix. 7) of Pergamum and Smyrna in the reign of Macrinus; and under Alexander Severus was at first proconsul of Africa, and was afterwards transferred to Dalmatia and thence to Upper Pannonia (lxxx. 1). After the year 229 he retired from public life, owing to an ailment of his feet (lxxx. 5).

A work on dreams and a monograph on the reign of the Emperor Commodus having elicited words of encouragement from Septimius Severus, Dion conceived the idea of writing a Roman history from the earliest time to his own day. During the intervals between his public employments abroad he used to retire to Capua and devote his leisure to this enterprise. He completed it in eighty Books, bringing the history down as far as the year of his second consulship, 229 A.D. Of this work we possess in a complete form only Books xxxvi. to lx., which cover the important period from 68 B.C. to 60 A.D. The earlier books were largely used by Zonaras whose Epitome we possess, and we have also a considerable number of fragments, preserved in the Excerpta de virtutibus et vitiis, and the Excerpta de legationibus (compilations made for Constantine VII. in the tenth century).[1] For the last twenty Books we have the abridgment by Xiphilin (eleventh century), but in the case of the lxxviiith and lxxixth a mutilated Ms. of the original text. For the reign of Antoninus Pius, however (bk. lxx.), even Xiphilin deserts us; there seems to have been a lacuna in his copy.

For the history of the early Empire we have few contemporary literary sources, and thus the continuous narrative of Dion is of inestimable value. Living before the Principate had passed away, and having had personal experience of affairs of state, he had a grasp of constitutional matters which was quite impossible for later writers; though in describing the institutions of Augustus he falls into the error of making statements which applied to his own age but not to the beginning of the Principate. He affected to be an Attic stylist and aspired to write like Thucydides. (The text of Dindorf—an important contribution to the study of Dion—is now being admirably re-edited by J. Melber; the first two volumes have already appeared.)

The history of Dion was continued by an Anonymous author, of whose work we have some fragments (collected in vol. iv. of Müller's Fragmenta Hist. Græc. p. 191 *sqq.*), and know something further through the fact that it was a main source of Zonaras when he had no longer Dion to follow. (See below, vol. ii. p. 531.)

[1] The Excerpta de Sententiis contain not direct extracts from Dion, but passages founded on his work. The Planudean Excerpts (fifteenth century) are spurious. See preface to Melber's edition.

Herodian was of Syrian birth, and, like Dion, was employed in the civil service, but in far humbler grades. If he had ever risen to the higher magistracies, if he had ever held the exalted position of a provincial governor, he would certainly have mentioned his success; the general expression which he employs, "Imperial and public offices" (i. 2), shows sufficiently that he had no career. The title of his work was "Histories of the Empire after Marcus," and embraced in eight Books the reigns from the accession of Commodus to that of Gordian III. His own comments on the events which he relates are tedious; and the importance of his book rests on the circumstance that he was an honest contemporary; he has none of the higher qualities of an historian. (Kreutzer's dissertation, De Herodiano rerum Rom. scriptore, 1881, may be referred to).

The Historia Augusta is a composite work, in which six several authors, who lived and wrote in the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine, had a hand. These authors however were not collaborators and did not write with a view to the production of the work which we possess. The Historia Augusta seems, in the light of recent criticism, to have been an eclectic compilation from a number of different, originally independent histories.

Ælius Spartianus wrote, by the wish of the Emperor Diocletian, whom he often addresses, a series of Imperial biographies (including Cæsars as well as Augusti) from the death of the dictator (post Cæsarem dictatorem; ii. 7, 5). He came down at least as far as Caracalla.

Vulcacius Gallicanus likewise addressed to Diocletian a work on the lives of all the Emperors who bore the full title of Augustus, whether by legitimate right or as tyrants. See vi. 3, 3.

The series of *Trebellius Pollio* was on a more limited scale. It began with the two Philips, and embracing all Emperors, whether renowned or obscure, reached as far as Claudius and his brother Quintillus. It was not dedicated to Diocletian but was written in his reign, before Constantius Chlorus had been raised to the dignity of Augustus, that is before 1st May 305 (cp. xxiii. 7, 1, where Claudius is described as the ancestor *Constanti Cæsaris nostri;* cp. too, *ib.* 14, 3, where *Constantinus* is an error for *Constantius*, and xxiv. 21, 7, where we get the prior limit of 302). It is probable that the work of Pollio was a continuation of another series of Lives which ended with the accession of Philip; and it is possible that this presumable series may have been actually that of Spartian or Vulcacius, but it is quite uncertain.

Flavius Vopiscus of Syracuse professedly continued the work of Pollio, and carried it down as far as the death of Carinus and accession of Diocletian. He wrote, at least, the life of Aurelian between 1st May 305 and 25th July 306, the period in which Constantius was Emperor; et est quidem iam Constantius imperator, xxvi. 44, 5.

Julius Capitolinus wrote another series of Imperial biographies, of which some were composed under, and dedicated to, Diocletian, while others were written at a later period for Constantine. Where he began is uncertain; the earliest Life from his pen which we possess is that of Antoninus Pius, the latest those of Maximus and Balbinus. Of the Lives which are extant under his name, those of Marcus, Lucius Verus, and Macrinus contain the name of Diocletian. Those of Albinus and the Maximins have internal notes of their dedication to Constantine. As Albinus comes chronologically between Verus and Macrinus, both dating from the reign of Diocletian, it is impossible, if the ascription of *Macrinus* to Capitolinus is right, to draw the conclusion that all the earlier Lives were written in the earlier period, and all the later Lives in the later. But to this point I shall return.

Aelius Lampridius dedicated his Imperial biographies to Constantine. He began with Commodus, if not earlier, and intended to include Diocletian and Maximian. The latest of his Lives that exists is that of Alexander Severus.

The original Ms. of the Historia Augusta, from which our Mss. are derived, contained a complete series of Imperial biographies, from Hadrian to Carinus, put together from the works of these six writers. The work of Pollio, and its con-

tinuation by Vopiscus, were included in their entirety. The contributions drawn from the various biographers may be conveniently seen in the following table :—

Spartian :	Hadrian . .	i.	(date : before May 305).
	Aelius Verus . .	ii.	
	Didius Julianus .	ix.	
	Severus . .	x.	
	Pescennius Niger .	xi.	
	Caracallus . .	xiii.	
Vulcacius :	Avidius Cassius .	vi.	(date : before May 305).
Capitolinus :	Antoninus Pius .	iii.	(date : before May 305).
	M. Antoninus .	iv.	
	Verus . .	v.	
	Pertinax . .	viii.	
	Clodius Albinus .	xii.	(date : reign of Constantine).
	Maximini duo .	xix.	
	Gordiani tres .	xx.	
	Maximus et Balbinus	xxi.	
Lampridius :	Commodus . .	vii.	(date : reign of Constantine).
	Diadumenus . .	xvi.	
	Heliogabalus . .	xvii.	
	Alexander Severus	xviii.	
Pollio	Philip to Claudius .	—— to xxv.	(date : before May 305).
Vopiscus :	Aurelian to Carinus	xxvi. to xxx.	(date : after May 305, and begun before July 306).

I. The Life of Geta (xiv.) I have not included in this list. The name of the author is not given in the Mss.; the *editio princeps* assigned it to Spartianus. There is, however, a serious objection against attributing it to Spartian in the lack of decisive external evidence. For it is dedicated to Constantine, whereas the Lives written by Spartian are dedicated to Diocletian. The fact that Spartian intended to write a life of Geta (see xiii. 11, 1) proves nothing; for there is nothing to show that separate Lives of Geta were not also included in the collections of Lampridius and Capitolinus, and that the compiler of the Historia Augusta did not prefer one of them to the *Geta* of Spartian.

II. The Life of Opilius Macrinus (xv.) I have also omitted, although the Mss. ascribe it to Capitolinus. But it is highly probable that the Inscriptio is not genuine. For the author of this Life only knows of two Gordians (3, 5, nec inter Antoninos referendi sunt duo Gordiani), herein agreeing with Lampridius (xvi. 32, and xvii. 34, 6); whereas Capitolinus is not only aware of the three Gordians, whose lives he wrote (xx.), but criticizes the ignorant writers who only speak of two (xx. 2, 1, Gordiani non, ut quidam inperiti scriptores locuntur, duo sed tres fuerunt). This flagrant contradiction, which imperatively forbids us to ascribe the *Gordians* and *Macrinus* to the same writer, is borne out by the fact that *Macrinus* is dedicated to Diocletian, whereas *Albinus* is addressed to Constantine. It is natural to suppose that Capitolinus wrote his Lives in chronological order, and completed in the reign of Constantine the biographical series which he had begun in that of Diocletian. If we decide that our *Macrinus* is not really his work, we restore the natural order. We cannot, however, suppose that *Macrinus* was the composition of Lampridius, who wrote under Constantine. We must attribute it either to Spartian or to Vulcacius.

III. The archetype of our Mss. was mutilated, and, unfortunately for the history of a very difficult period, there is a lacuna extending from the end of *Maximus* and *Balbinus* into the *Two Valerians*, of which only a congeries of fragments remains. Thus the Lives of Philip, Decius, and Gallus by Trebellius Pollio are lost. The subscription at the end of *Maximus* and *Balbinus* attributes the *Valerians* to Capitolinus, but this is clearly an insertion made after the lost Lives had fallen out.

IV. In general the Lives are arranged in chronological order. There are three remarkable deviations. (1) Didius Julianus comes after Verus and before Commodus, in the place where we should expect Avidius Cassius, while Avidius comes where we expect Julianus. (2) Albinus comes after Macrinus instead of following Pescennius; and (3) Heliogabalus, Diadumenus, Macrinus takes the place of the proper order Macrinus, Diadumenus, Heliogabalus. In all three cases Peter has corrected the Mss. in his edition. These misplacements cannot be explained by mistakes in the binding of the sheets

(quaternions) of the archetype, though such mistakes certainly occurred and led to minor misplacements notably that in the Life of Alexander, c. 43 (see Peter's ed.).

All these writers have much the same idea of historical biography. They give a great many personal details, and are fond of trivial anecdotes; but they have no notion of perspicuous arrangement, and no apprehension of deeper historical questions. Their chief source for the earlier Lives was Marius Maximus (used by Spartian, Vulcacius, Capitolinus and Lampridius, and criticized by Vopiscus as homo omnium verbosissimus, xxix. 1), who continued the work of Suetonius, from Nerva to Elagabalus. He lived about 170-230 A.D. (See, for a daring attempt to reconstruct the history of Marius, Müller's essay in Büdinger's Untersuchungen zur römischen Kaisergeschichte, vol. iii. The tract of J. Plew, Marius Maximus als directe und indirecte Quelle der Scriptores Hist. Aug., 1878, is of much greater value.) Capitolinus and the author of the Vita Macrini, also used a work of Junius Cordus who devoted himself to the elucidation of the obscurer reigns (xv. 1). But there were other stray sources both Latin and Greek. For example Acholius, master of ceremonies to the Emperor Valerian, described the journeys of Alexander Severus and was consulted by Lampridius (xviii. 64). The same writer wrote Acta, in the ninth Book of which he dealt with the reign of Valerian (xxvi. 12). For other sources see Teuffel, Gesch. der rom. Litt., § 387. The introduction of Vopiscus to his Life of Aurelian is well worth reading. It throws some light on the way in which these lives were written and the sources which the writers commanded. We learn that Aurelian's daily acts were written by his own orders in *libri lintei*, and the historian could obtain them from the numbered cases[1] of the Ulpian Library. The war of Aurelian then was an official account (*charactere historico digesta*).

The citation of original documents (both genuine and spurious) is a feature of the Historia Augusta. Vopiscus, and perhaps the others in some cases, took these directly from the originals in the Ulpian Library, but in the case of the earlier Lives it is highly probable that they were drawn, at second hand, from Marius Maximus, who included such *pièces justicatifs* in his work.

The uncertainty which prevailed in the reign of Diocletian as to leading events which happened as late as the reign of Aurelian is illustrated instructively by the dispute among historical students, recorded by Vopiscus, as to whether Firmus, the tyrant of Egypt, had been invested with the purple, and reigned as an Emperor, or not (xxix. 2).

A special word must be said about the Lives of Trebellius Pollio. It has been shown with tolerable certainty, by the investigations of H. Peter, that all the original documents which he inserts, whether transactions, or letters, or speeches, are forgeries. He has also been convicted of unfairness in his presentation of the personality of Gallienus. When Gibbon says (chap. x. note 156), that the character of that unfortunate prince has been fairly transmitted to us, on the ground that "the historians who wrote before the elevation of the family of Constantine, could not have the most remote interest to misrepresent the character of Gallienus," he overlooks the internal evidence in the Biographies of Pollio (as pointed out above) which proves that this writer was actuated by the wish to glorify Constantius indirectly by a glorification of Claudius. He had thus a distinct motive for disparaging the abilities and actions of Gallienus. For, by pourtraying that monarch as incapable of ruling and utterly incompetent to cope with the dangers which beset the Empire, he was enabled to suggest a contrast between the contemptible prince and his brilliant successor. Through such a contrast the achievements of Claudius seemed more striking. (Recently F. Rothkegel in a treatise on Die Regierung des Gallienus, of which the first part has appeared, 1894, has endeavoured to do justice to Gallienus, and show that he was not so bad or incompetent as he has been made out.)

The best text of the Historia Augusta is that of H. Peter, who is the chief authority on the subject. Out of the large literature, which bears on these

[1] Cp. xxvii. 8, 1, where an "ivory volume in the sixth armarium" is referred to. Decrees of the Senate, relating to the Emperors, used to be written in ivory books, as we learn in the same place.

biographies, I may refer to Gemoll's Die Script. Hist. Aug. 1886, which has been largely used in this account of the Augustan Biographies. Dessau has recently proved (Hermes, 1889) that the Lives were seriously interpolated in the age of Theodosius. His daring thesis that they are entirely forgeries is rejected by Mommsen, who admits the interpolations (*ib.* 1890).

When the Historia Augusta deserts us, our sources, whether Greek or Latin, are either late or scrappy. We can extract some historical facts from a number of contemporary PANEGYRICAL ORATIONS, mostly of uncertain authorship, composed for special occasions under Maximian and his successors. These will be best consulted in the xii. Panegyrici Latini edited by Bährens. No. 2 in praise of Maximian is doubtfully ascribed to Claudius Mamertinus; it was composed at Trier in 289 A.D. for 21st April, the birthday of Rome. No. 3, said to be by the same author, is a *genethliacus* for Maximian's birthday in 291. No. 4 is the plea of Eumenius of Augustodunum *pro restaurandis scholis* pronounced in the end of 297 before the *praeses provinciae*. No. 5, of uncertain authorship, but probably by Eumenius, is a panegyric on Constantius, delivered in the spring of the same year at Trier. No. 6 extols Maximian and Constantine, on the occasion of the marriage of Constantine with Fausta, Maximian's daughter, 307. No. 7 (probably by Eumenius), is a panegyric on Constantine, delivered at Trier, shortly after the execution of Maximian, 310. No. 8 (also plausibly ascribed to Eumenius), is a speech of thanksgiving to Constantine for benefits which he bestowed upon Autun, 311. No. 9 is a eulogy of Constantine pronounced at Trier, early in 313, and contains a brief account of his Italian expedition No. 10 bears the name of Nazarius, and is likewise a panegyric of Constantine, dating from the fifteenth year of his reign, 321. (On Eumenius cp. Brandt, Eumenius von Augustodunum, &c., 1882.)

SEXTUS AURELIUS VICTOR was appointed (Ammianus tells us, xxi. 10, 6) governor of the Second Pannonia by the Emperor Julian in 361; and at a later period became Prefect of the City. Inscriptions confirm both statements (see C. I. L. 6, 1186, and Orelli-Henzen, 3715). He was of African birth (see his Cæs. 20, 6), and a pagan. Some think that the work known as Cæsares was composed in its present form by Victor himself; but in the two Mss. (Bruxell. and Oxon.) the title is Aurelii Victoris historiæ abbreviatæ, and Th. Opitz (Quæstiones de Sex. Aurelio Victore, in the Acta Societ. Philol. Lips. ii. 2) holds that it is an abridgment of a larger work—an opinion which is shared by Wölfflin and others. (A convenient critical edition has been recently brought out by F. Pichlmayer, 1892.) The Epitome (*libellus de vita et moribus imperatorum breviatus ex libris Sex. Aurelii Victoris a Cæsare Aug. usque ad Theodosium*) seems dependent on the Cæsares as far as Domitian, but afterwards differs completely. Marius Maximus was very probably one of the chief sources.

EUTROPIUS held the office of *magister memoriae* at the court of Valens (365-378 A.D.), to whom he dedicated his Short Roman History (Breviarium ab urbe condita). He had taken part, as he tells us, in the fatal expedition of Julian, 363 A.D. (x. 16, 1). His handbook, which comes down to the death of Jovian, was a success, and had the honour of being translated into Greek about 380 A.D. by the Syrian Paeanius, a pupil of Libanius (see above, p. 185). It contrasts favourably with other books of the kind, both in matter and in style. His chief sources were Suetonius, the writers of the Historia Augusta, and the work of the unknown author who is generally designated as the "CHRONOGRAPHER OF 354".

This work, unknown to Gibbon, was published and commented on by Mommsen in the Abhandlungen der sächs. Gesellschaft der Wissensch. in 1850, and has been recently published by the same editor in vol i. of the Chronica Minora in the M. H. G. It contains a number of various lists, including Fasti Consulares up to 354, the praefecti urbis of Rome from 258 to 354, the bishops of Rome up to Liberius (352). The Mss. contain later additions, especially the so-called Chronicon Cuspiniani (published by Cuspinianus in 1552 along with the Chronicle of Cassiodorus), which is a source of value for the reigns of Leo and Zeno and the first years of Anastasius.

Another historical epitome dedicated to Valens was that of (Rufus) Festus, who seems also to have been a *magister memoriae*. The time at which his book was composed can be precisely fixed to 369 A.D. by his reference to "this great victory over the Goths" (c. 29) gained by Valens in that year and by the fact that he is ignorant of the province of Valentia, which was formed in the same year. Festus has some valuable notices for the history of the fourth century.

L. Caelius Lactantius Firmianus lived at Nicomedia under Diocletian an Constantine, and taught rhetoric. In the later years of his life he had the honour of acting as the tutor of Constantine's son, Crispus. Our chief authority for his life is Jerome; cp. esp. De Viris Illust., 80. His works were mainly theological, and the chief of them is the Divine Institutions in seven Books. But the most important for the historian is the treatise De Mortibus Persecutorum,—concerning the manners of death which befel the persecutors of Christianity from Nero to Maximin. It was composed in 314-315 A.D. Its authorship has been a matter of dispute, for it does not bear the name Lactantius, but L. Cæcilius. It is, however, by no means improbable that L. Cæcilius is Lactantius, and that the treatise is that enumerated by Jerome (*loc. cit.*) among his works as de persecutione librum unum. There is a remarkable resemblance in vocabulary and syntax with the undoubted works of Lactantius, and differences in style can be explained by the difference of subject. The author of the De Mortibus is accurately informed as to the events which took place in Nicomedia, and he dedicates his work to Donatus, to whom Lactantius addressed another treatise, De Ira Dei. Due allowance being made for the tendency of the De Mortibus, it is a very important contemporary source.

Other authorities which, though referred to in the present volume, are more concerned with the history of subsequent events, such as Ammianus Marcellinus, the Anonymous known as Anon. Valesianus, Eusebius, Zosimus, will be noticed in the Appendix to vol. ii.

Modern Works. For the general history: Schiller's Geschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit (2 vols., from Augustus to Theodosius I.), up to date and very valuable for references. Mommsen, Römische Geschichte, vol. v. Die Provinzen von Cäsar bis Diocletian (also in Eng. trans. in 2 vols.). Hoeck's Römische Geschichte (reaching as far as Constantine) is now rather antiquated; Duruy's History of Rome (to Theodosius the Great) may also be mentioned. For the general administration, including the military system of which Gibbon treats in chap. i.: Marquardt, Handbuch der römischen Alterthümer (Staatsverwaltung, vols. iv.-vi.); and Schiller's summary in Ivan Müller's Handbuch der klass. Alterthumswissenschaft. For manners, social life, &c., under the early empire: Friedländer's Darstellungen aus der Sittengeschichte Roms in der Zeit von Augustus bis zum Ausgang der Antonine. For chronology: Clinton's Fasti Romani, and Goyau's short Chronologie de l'Empire romain; Klein's Fasti Consulares.

A few special monographs (in addition to those referred to elsewhere) may be mentioned here. Hundertmark, de Imperatore Pertinace. Höfner, Untersuchungen zur Gesch. des Kaisers L. Septimius Severus; A. de Ceuleneer, Essai sur la vie et la règne de Septime Sevère; Wirth, Quaestiones Severianae. A. Duncker, Claudius Gothicus. Preuss, Kaiser Diokletian und seine Zeit; Vogel, Der Kaiser Diokletian.

2. CONQUEST OF BRITAIN—(P. 4, and P. 36)

It may be well to note more exactly how Roman arms progressed in Britain after Claudius. (Our chief authority is the Agricola of Tacitus.) The first legatus sent by Vespasian was Petillius Cerealis, who fought against the Brigantes and subdued the eastern districts of the island as far north as Lincoln (Lindum). A line drawn from Chester (Deva) to Lincoln would rightly mark the limits of Roman rule at this time. Cerealis was succeeded by Frontinus (whose treatise on the science of warfare is extant), and he reduced the Silures (in the west). Then came Agricola, whose government lasted from 78 to 85 A.D. He

attempted to extend the Roman frontiers both northward and westward, but failed to consolidate his conquests. The only lasting fruit of the enterprises of Agricola was the acquisition of York (Eburacum),—a fact which Tacitus does not record and which we have to infer.

On p. 36, n. 34, Gibbon mentions nine colonies in Britain, on the authority of Richard of Cirencester, which has no value. The only towns, which we know to have had the rank of *coloniae*, are Camalodunum, Eburacum, Glevum, Lindum. Verulamium was a municipium.

3. THE CONQUESTS OF TRAJAN, AND POLICY OF HADRIAN— (P. 5)

The first Dacian war of Trajan lasted during 101 and 102 A.D. and Trajan celebrated his triumph at the end of the latter year, taking the title of Dacicus. The second war began two years later, and was concluded in 107 by the dissensions of the barbarians and the suicide of Decebalus. Our only contemporary sources for these wars are monumental,—the sculptures on the Pillar of Trajan and some inscriptions. Unfortunately Trajan's own work on the war has perished. (Arosa and Froehner have published in a splendid form photographic reproductions of the scenes on the column of Trajan, Paris, 1872-1874. For details of the war, see Jung, Römer und Romanen in den Donauländern; a paper of Xenopol in the Revue Historique, 1886; and an interesting Hungarian monograph by Király on Sarmizegetusa, Dacia fővárosa, 1891. On the reign of Trajan, consult Dierauer's paper in Büdinger's Untersuchungen, vol. i., and De la Berge, Essai sur la règne Trajan. I may also refer to the Student's Roman Empire.)

Trajan's Dacia must be carefully distinguished from *Dacia ripensis* south of the Danube, a province formed, as we shall see, at a much later date. The capital of northern Dacia was Sarmizegetusa, a Dacian town, which was founded anew after Trajan's conquest under the name of Ulpia Trajana. The traveller in Siebenbürgen may now trace the remains of this historic site at Várhely, as the Hungarians have named it. H. Schiller lays stress on one important result of the Dacian war: "The military centre of gravity of the Empire" was transferred from the Rhine to the Danube (Gesch. der röm. Kaiserzeit, i. 554).

Gibbon omits to mention as a third "exception," besides Britain and Dacia, the acquisition of new territory in the north of Arabia (east of Palestine), and the organization of a province of "Arabia" by Cornelius Palma (106 A.D.). This change was accomplished peacefully; the two important towns of Petra and Bostra had been already Roman for a considerable time. The chief value of the province lay in the fact that the caravans from the East on their way to Egypt passed through it. There are remarkable ruins at Petra which testify to its importance.

Hadrian, as Gibbon explains, narrowed the boundaries of the Empire in the East (it may be disputed whether he was right in resigning Great Armenia); but he was diligent in making strong the defences of what he retained. The Euphrates was a sufficient protection in itself; but in other quarters Hadrian found work to do, and did it. He built forts on the northern frontier of Dacia; he completed the rampart which defended the exposed corner between the Danube and Rhine; and it is probable that he built the great wall in Britain, from the mouth of the Tyne to the Solway. He visited Britain in 122 A.D. (The chronology of his travels given by Merivale must be modified in the light of more recent research. See J. Dürr, Die Reisen des Kaisers Hadrian, 1881, and the Student's Roman Empire.)

It has been said that under no Emperor was the Roman army in better condition than under Hadrian. Dion Cassius regarded him as the founder of what might be almost called a new military system, and from his time the character of the army becomes more and more "cosmopolitan" (Schiller, i. 609).

4. THE ROMAN ARMY—(P. 12)

In his account of the army Gibbon closely followed Vegetius, whose statements must be received with caution. I may call attention here to a few points.

(*a*) The legion contained ten cohorts; and the cohort, which had its own standard (*signum*), six centuries. Each century was commanded by a centurion. Under the early Empire, each legion was commanded by a *tribunus militum Augusti* (under the republic, *trib. mil. a populo*), who, however, was subject to the authority of a higher officer, the *legatus legionis*, who was supreme commander of both the legion and the auxiliary troops associated with it. In later times (as we learn from Vegetius) the sphere of the tribune was reduced to the cohort. The number of soldiers in a legion was elastic, and varied at different times. It is generally reckoned at six thousand foot, and one hundred and twenty horsemen (four *turmae*).

(*b*) The *auxilia* included all the standing troops, except the legions, the volunteers (*cohortes Italicae civium Romanorum voluntariorum*), and of course the prætorian guards. They were divided into cohorts, and were under the command of the *legati*. Cavalry and infantry were often combined, and constituted a *cohors equitata*. Each cohort (like the legionary cohort) had its standard, and consisted of six or ten centuries, according to its size, which might be five hundred or a thousand men. To be distinguished from the *auxilia* were a provincial militia, which appear in certain provinces (such as Rætia, Britain, Dacia). They were not imperial, and were supported by provincial funds (Mommsen, Die röm. Provinzialmilizen, Hermes, xxii. 4).

(*c*) The use of "artillery" on a large scale was due to Greek influence. It played an important part in the Macedonian army. The fixed number of engines mentioned in the text (ten *onagri* and fifty-five *carroballistae*) was perhaps introduced in the time of Vespasian. Vegetius, ii. 25; Josephus, Bell. Jud. 5, 6, 3.

(*d*) As for the distribution of the troops, Gibbon arrived at his statement by combining what Tacitus tells of the reign of Tiberius, and what Dion Cassius tells of the reign of Alexander Severus; always a doubtful method of procedure, and in this case demonstrably leading to erroneous results. Under Tiberius in 23 A.D. there were four legions in Upper Germany, four in Lower Germany, three in Spain, two in Egypt, four in Syria, two in Pannonia, two in Dalmatia, two in Moesia, two temporarily removed from Pannonia to Africa. New legions were created by Claudius, Nero, Domitian, &c.; on the other hand, some of the old legions disappeared, or their names were changed. Three new legions (i., ii., and iii. Parthica) were instituted by Septimius Severus. Each legion had a special name. A list of the legions (thirty in number) in the time of Marcus Aurelius will be found in Marquardt, Röm Alterthümer, iii. 2, 356. The history of the Roman legions is a very difficult subject, and the conclusions of Pfitzner (Geschichte der römischen Kaiserlegionen) are extremely doubtful (see Mr. E. G. Hardy in the Journal of Philology, xxiii. 29 *sqq.*).

(*e*) The *cohortes urbanae* had their headquarters in the *Forum Suarium* (Pig-market) at Rome. They were at first four in number, of one thousand men each, until the time of Claudius, who seems to have increased the number to six; Vespasian perhaps added another. Some of these regiments were sometimes stationed elsewhere; for example, at Lyons, Ostia, Puteoli.

See further article Exercitus in Smith's Dictionary of Antiquities, new edition.

5. THE ROMAN NAVY—(P. 18)

The fleets of Ravenna and Misenum were called the *classes praetoriae*, a fitting name, as they were the naval guards of the Emperor as long as he resided at Old Rome.

The fleet at (1) Forum Julium was discontinued soon after the time of Augustus. The other lesser naval stations under the Empire were (2) Seleucia, for the *classis Syriaca;* (3) Alexandria, for the *classis Augusta Alexandreae;*

(4) the Island of Carpathos; (5) at the beginning of the fifth century, Aquileia, for the *classis Venetum*. Besides these there were (6) the *classis Pontica*, stationed in the Euxine or in the Propontis, and (7) the *classis Britannica*, both mentioned in the author's text. There were also fleets on the three great rivers of the Empire; (8) the *classis Germanica* on the Rhine; (9) the *classis Pannonica* and *Mœsica* on the Danube; and (10) a fleet on the Euphrates (mentioned by Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiii. 3, 9).

6. THE PROVINCES OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN 180 A.D.—(P. 18)

For a general view of the provinces, the reader must be referred to Mommsen's brilliant volume Die Provinzen von Cäsar bis Diocletian (translated into English in two vols.). For the general administration, including the military system, see Marquardt, Handbuch der römischen Alterthümer (Staatsverwaltung, vols. iv.-vi.).

1. Sicilia, the first Roman province, 241 B.C. It became a *senatorial* province in 27 B.C.

2. Sardinia and Corsica, 231 B.C. Senatorial in 27 B.C., but became imperial in 6 A.D. Again senatorial under Nero; once more *imperial* under Vespasian, and governed by a *procurator et praeses*. (Given to senate again by M. Aurelius but resumed by Commodus.)

3. Hispania citerior, or Tarraconensis, 197 B.C.; *imperial*. (Divided into 3 dioceses, each under a leg. Augusti.)

4. Baetica, *senatorial*.
5. Lusitania, *imperial*.

These formed one province under the Republic, Hispania ulterior (197 B.C.), which was divided soon after the foundation of the Empire (27 B.C.).

6. Gallia Narbonensis, after 121 B.C. (At first, imperial, after) 22 B.C. *senatorial*.

7. Aquitania, 27 B.C.
8. Lugdunensis, 27 B.C.
9. Belgica, 27 B.C.

Called collectively *tres Galliae*, at first under one imperial governor; after 17 A.D. each had its own *imperial* governor.

10. Germania superior, 17 A.D. (?).
11. Germania inferior, 17 A.D. (?).

The civil administration of these frontier districts was united with that of Belgica. The military commanders were consular legati.

12. Alpes Maritimæ, 14 B.C. made an *imperial* province, governed by a (prefect, afterwards a) procurator.

13. Alpes Cottiæ, under Nero, *imperial* (under a *procurator et praeses*).

14. Alpes Poeninæ (or A. Poeninæ et Graiæ); in second century became an *imperial* province (under a procurator).

15. Britannia, 43 A.D., *imperial*.

16. Rætia, 15 B.C., *imperial* (under a procurator); but after Marcus Aurelius governed by the legatus pro prætore of the legion *Concordia*.

17. Noricum, 15 B.C., *imperial*, under a procurator. After Marcus, under the general of the legion *Pia*. (Dion Cassius, lv. 24, 4.)

18. Pannonia superior.
19. Pannonia inferior.
20. Dalmatia, or Illyricum.

After its conquest Pannonia was added to the province of Illyria (44 B.C.), *imperial;* which was broken up into Pannonia and Dalmatia 10-14 A.D.; Dalmatia under a consular legatus. Pannonia was broken up by Trajan (102-107 A.D.) into the two Pannoniæ, each under a consular legatus (at least under Marcus).

21. Moesia superior.
22. Moesia inferior.

Moesia, 6 A.D., an *imperial* province, was broken up into the two Moesias by Domitian under consular legati.

23. Dacia Porolissensis.
24. Dacia Apulensis.
25. Dacia Maluensis.

Dacia, 107 A.D., was at first one province (*imperial*). Hadrian broke it up into two (superior and inferior). Marcus made a new triple division (not later than 168 A.D.), and placed the provinces under consular legati.

26. Thracia, 46 A.D., *imperial* (at first under a procurator, but from Trajan forward) under a legatus.

27. Macedonia, 146 B.C.; senatorial in 27 B.C.; from Tiberius to Claudius, imperial and united with Achaia; after Claudius, *senatorial*.

28. Achaia. } Included in Macedonia, 146 B.C.; together formed a senatorial province, 27 B.C.; after having been united with Macedonia (15 and 44 A.D.), restored to the senate, and declared free by Nero,

29. Epirus. } it was made *senatorial* by Vespasian. This Emperor probably separated Epirus (including Acarnamia), *imperial*, under a procurator.

30. Asia, 133 B.C.; *senatorial* 27 B.C. (under a consular).

31. Bithynia and Pontus, 74 and 65 B.C.; senatorial 27 B.C., became under Hadrian *imperial*.

32. Galatia (including Pontus Polemoniacus) 25 B.C. *imperial;* united twice and twice severed from Cappadocia; finally separated by Trajan and placed under a praetorian legatus.

33. Cappadocia (including Lesser Armenia) 17 A.D. *imperial;* (procuratorial till Vespasian, 70 A.D., gave it a consular legatus).

34. Lycia and Pamphylia, 43 A.D.; after various changes definitely constituted as imperial by Vespasian, 74 A.D., but transferred to the *senate* by Hadrian.

35. Cilicia, 102 B.C. At one time apparently united with Syria, but independent since Vespasian. From Hadrian (including Trachea) *imperial* under legatus; Severus transferred Isauria and Lycaonia from Galatia to Cilicia.

36. Cyprus, 58 B.C.; at first united with Cilicia; 22 B.C., became an independent *senatorial* province.

37. Syria, 64 B.C.; *imperial* under consular legatus, 27 B.C.

38. Syria Palaestina (= Judæa), separated from Syria 70 A.D., *imperial* under legatus.

39. Arabia, 106 A.D., *imperial*.

40. Aegyptus, 30 B.C., *imperial* domain under *praefectus Aegypti*.

41. Creta and Cyrene, at first one province (67 B.C. and 74 B.C. respectively); united 27 B.C. as a *senatorial* province (under a praetor).

42. Africa, 146 B.C., *senatorial* under a consular proconsul; seems to have included Numidia from 25 B.C.

43. Mauretania Caesariensis. } 40 A.D., *imperial* (under procurators).
44. Mauretania Tingitana. }

It is important to note some changes that were made between the death of Marcus and the accession of Diocletian. (1) The diocese of Asturia et Gallaecia was cut off as a separate imperial province from Tarraconensis (216 or 217 A.D.); (2) Britannia was divided by Septimius Severus (197 A.D.) into Brit. superior and Brit. inferior (each probably under a *praeses*); (3) Septimius made Numidia a separate province (under a legatus till Aurelian, afterwards under a *praeses*); (4) Syria was divided by the same Emperor (198 A.D.) into Syria Cœle (Magna) and Syr. Phœnice; (5) Arabia was divided in the third century into Ar. Bostræa and Arabia Petræa, corresponding to the two chief towns of the province; (6) Mesopotamia (made a province by Trajan, and resigned by Hadrian) was restored by Lucius Verus; (7) For Dacia see p. 294.

7. CHANGES IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE SINCE GIBBON WROTE—(Pp. 22, 23)

Gibbon's account of the political geography of the Illyrian lands brings home to us the changes which have taken place within the last century. When he wrote, Servia and Bulgaria were "united in Turkish slavery"; Greece herself was under the same bondage as well as Moldavia, Walachia and Bosnia; the Dalmatian coast was a province of the Venetian State. Since then (1) the Turkish realm in Europe has been happily reduced, and (2) Austria has advanced

at the expense of Venice. (1) Now Greece and Servia are each a kingdom, wholly independent of the Turk; Bulgaria is a free principality, only formally dependent on the Sultan. Moldavia and Walachia form the independent kingdom of Roumania. Even a portion of Thrace, south of the Balkans, known as Eastern Roumelia has been annexed to Bulgaria. Macedonia and the greatest part of Epirus are still Turkish. (2) All the Dalmatian coast, including Ragusa, belongs to Austria, but Antivari and Dulcigno belong to the independent Slavonic principality of Tzernagora or Montenegro (which was founded in the middle of the fifteenth century, preserved its independence against the Turks with varying success ever since, and in our own time played a conspicuous part in the events of 1876 to 1878, which so effectually checked the power of the Turk). Austria also acquired (by the treaty of Berlin, 1878) the protectorate of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

8. COLONIES AND MUNICIPIA, IUS LATINUM—(P. 36)

The distinction between colonies and municipal towns, and the history of *ius Latinum*, are explained briefly in the following passage of the Student's Roman Empire, pp. 76, 77.

"It is to be observed that these communities were either *coloniæ* or *municipia*. In the course of Italian history the word *municipium* had completely changed its meaning. Originally it was applied to a community possessing *ius Latinum*, and also to the *civitas sine suffragio*, and thus it was a term of contrast to those communities which possessed full Roman citizenship. But when in the course of time the *civitates sine suffragio* received political rights and the Roman states received full Roman citizenship, and thus the *municipium* proper disappeared from Italy, the word was still applied to those communities of Roman citizens which had originally been either Latin *municipia* or independent federate states. And it also, of course, continued to be applied to cities outside Italy which possessed *ius Latinum*. It is clear that originally *municipium* and *colonia* were not incompatible ideas. For a colony founded with *ius Latinum* was both a *municipium* and a *colonia*. But a certain opposition arose between them, and became stronger when *municipium* came to be used in a new sense. *Municipium* is only used of communities which existed as independent states before they received Roman citizenship, whether by the deduction of a colony or not. *Colonia* is generally confined to those communities which were settled for the first time as Roman cities, and were never states before. Thus *municipium* involves a reference to previous autonomy.

"Besides Roman cities, there were also Latin cities in the provinces. Originally there were two kinds of *ius Latinum*, one better and the other inferior. The old Latin colonies possessed the better kind. The inferior kind was known as the *ius* of Ariminum, and it alone was extended to provincial communities. When Italy received Roman citizenship after the Social war, the better kind of *ius Latinum* vanished for ever, and the lesser kind only existed outside Italy. The most important privilege which distinguished the Latin from peregrine communities was that the member of a Latin city had a prospect of obtaining full Roman citizenship by holding magistracies in his own community. The Latin communities are of course autonomous and are not controlled by the provincial governor; but like Roman communities they have to pay tribute for their land, which is the property of the Roman people, unless they possess immunity or *ius Italicum* as well as *ius Latinum*."

9. THE MINE OF SOUMELPOUR—(P. 55)

In an appendix to the second volume of his translation of Tavernier's Travels in India, Mr. V. Ball has pointed out (p. 457), that the diamond mine of Soumelpour on the Gouel is not to be identified, as hitherto, with Sambulpur on the Mahánadi, but is the same as "Semah or Semulpur on the Koel, in the Sub-Division of Palámau".

In the original, and all subsequent editions of Gibbon the name was spelt "Jumelpur". Mr. Ball rightly remarks that this is merely a misprint; and I have corrected it in the text.

10. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE—(Chapter III.)

The constitutional history of Rome (both Republican and Imperial) has been set on a new basis since Gibbon. The impulse was given by Niebuhr; and this branch of history has progressed hand in hand with the study of inscriptions on stone and metal. No one has done so much for the subject as Mommsen, whose Römisches Staatsrecht (3 vols.) occupies the same position for Roman constitutional history as the work of Bishop Stubbs for English. Another recent work of importance is E. Herzog's Geschichte und System der römischen Staatsverfassung (2 vols.). Madvig's Verfassung und Verwaltung des römischen Staates was retrogressive. The works of Mispoulet and Willems may also be mentioned. Of great value for details is O. Hirschfeld's Untersuchungen auf dem Gebiete der römischen Verwaltungsgeschichte. For the imperial procurators see "Procurator" in Smith's Dictionary of Antiquities, new edition.

It would be endless to enumerate the writers from whom material for the constitutional history is drawn; but attention must be called to the importance of inscriptions and coins which fill up many gaps in our knowledge. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that the Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum (edited by Mommsen and others) is the keystone of Mommsen's Staatsrecht. The Corpus is not yet complete, and must be supplemented by the collections of Orelli-Henzen and Wilmanns.

The most important collections of coins are Eckhel's Doctrina Numorum Veterum (8 vols.), which appeared in 1792—some years too late for Gibbon,—and Cohen's Descriptions des monnaies frappées sous l'Empire romain communément appelées Médailles impériales (1859-1868).

For a short account of the Imperial constitution I may refer to Mr. Pelham's article on the Principate in Smith's Dictionary of Antiquities, and to the Student's Roman Empire, chaps. ii. and iii. Here it will be enough to draw attention to a few important points in which Gibbon's statements need correction or call for precision.

(1) P. 60.—"Prince of the Senate."

The view that the name *princeps* meant *princeps senatus* held its ground until a few years ago, when it was exploded by Mr. Pelham. *Princeps*, the general, non-official designation of the emperors, meant "first of the Roman citizens" (*princeps civium Romanorum* or *civitatis*), and had nothing to do with the Senate.

Ib.—"He was elected censor."

The censorship of Augustus was only temporary; it was not considered one of the necessary prerogatives of the princeps, for that, as Gibbon says, would have meant the destruction of the independence of the senate. It must be remembered that in the *theory* of the principate the independence of the senate was carefully guarded, though practically the influence of the princeps was predominant. Augustus discharged the functions of censor repeatedly; not, however, under that name, but as *præfectus morum*. Gibbon is wrong in stating (p. 65) that the censorship was one of the Imperial prerogatives. He was followed in this by Merivale.

(3) P. 63.—"Lieutenants of the Emperor."

The provinces fell into two classes according as consulars or prætorians were admitted to the post of governor. But this distinction must not be confounded with that of the titles *pro consule* and *pro prætore*, which were borne by the governors of senatorial and Imperial provinces respectively. The representative of the emperor could not be *pro consule*, as his position depended on the proconsular imperium of the emperor himself. A *vir consularis* might be *pro prætore*. The full title of the Imperial lieutenant was *legatus Augusti pro prætore*.

In the dependent kingdoms were placed *procuratores*, of equestrian rank.

(4) P. 64.—"Consular and tribunitian powers."

Gibbon's statements here require correction, though the question of the exact constitution of the power of the princeps is still a matter of debate.

Augustus at first intended to found the principate as a continuation of the proconsular imperium with the consulate, and he held the consulate from 27 to 23 B.C. But then he changed his mind, as this arrangement gave rise to some difficulties, and replaced the consular power by the tribunitian power, which had been conferred on him for life in 36 B.C., after his victory over Sextus Pompeius. Thus the principate depended on the association of the proconsular with the tribunitian power; and Augustus dated the years of his reign from 23, not from 27 B.C. After this he filled the consulship only in those years in which he instituted a census.

(5) P. 65.—"Supreme pontiff."

He became Pontiff in 12 B.C. Besides being Pont. Max. Augustus belonged to the other sacerdotal colleges. He was *augur, septemvir, quindecimvir.*

11. THE CONSTITUTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRINCIPATE OF SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS—(Pp. 120-125)

The name of Septimius Severus marks an important stage in the development of the Principate of Augustus into the absolute monarchy of Diocletian. If he had been followed by emperors as strong and far-sighted as himself, the goal would have been reached sooner; and, moreover, the tendencies of his policy would have been clearer to us. But the administration of his immediate successors was arbitrary; and the reaction under Alexander threw things back. Severus had no Tiberius or Constantine to follow him; and like Augustus he committed the error of founding a dynasty. His example was a warning to Diocletian.

The records of his reign show that he took little account of the senate, and made much of the army. This has been brought out by Gibbon. But it would be a mistake to call his rule a military despotism. He did not apply military methods to civil affairs. He was more than a mere soldier-emperor; he was a considerable statesman.

His influence on constitutional history concerns three important points. (1) He furthered in a very marked way the tendency, already manifest early in the second century, to remove the line of distinction between Italy and the provinces. (*a*) He recruited the Prætorian guards, hitherto Italians, from the legionaries, and so from the provinces. (*b*) He encroached on the privileges of Italy by quartering one of three new legions, which he created, in a camp on Mount Alba near Rome. (*c*) He assumed the proconsular title in Italy. (*d*) By the bestowal of *ius Italicum* he elevated a great many provincial cities (in Dacia, Africa, and Syria) to a level with Italy. (2) He increased the importance of the Prætorian Prefect. We can now see this post undergoing a curious change from a military into a civil office. Held by Papinian, it seemed to be the summit in the career not of a soldier but of a jurist. (3) The financial policy of Severus in keeping the *res privata* of the princeps distinct from his *fiscus*,—crown property as distinguished from state revenue (cp. p. 99, footnote 52).

There is no doubt that the tendency to give effect to the *maius imperium* of the princeps in controlling the governors of the senatorial provinces and the republican magistrates (consuls) was confirmed and furthered under Severus. For example, governors of senatorial provinces are brought before his court, Hist. Aug. x. 4, 8. The *maius imperium*, used with reserve by the earlier emperors, was one of the chief constitutional instruments by which the princeps ousted the senate from the government and converted the "dyarchy" into a monarchy.

Note.—In regard to the præfecture of the Prætorian guards, the rule that it should be held by two colleagues was generally observed from Augustus to Diocletian. We can quote cases of (1) *two* præfects under Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius, Claudius, Nero, Otho, Vitellius, Domitian, Trajan, Hadrian, Pius, Marcus, Commodus, Julianus, Severus, Caracalla, Elagabalus, Macrinus, Alexander,

Gordian; (2) of *one* præfect under Augustus (Seius Strabo), Tiberius (Sejanus Macro), Claudius and Nero (Burrus), Galba, Vespasian (Clemens, Titus), Pius, Alexander (Ulpian), Probus; (3) of *three* præfects under Commodus, Julianus, Alexander (Ulpian as superior colleague and two others).

12. CHRONOLOGY OF 238 A.D.—(P. 179)

The chronological difficulties of the year 238, which exercised Tillemont, Clinton, Eckhel (vii. 293 *sqq.*) and Borghesi, have been recently discussed with care by O. Seeck in a paper in the Rheinisches Museum, xli. (p. 161 *sqq.*) 1886, and by J. Löhrer in his monograph de Julio Vero Maximino.

The Chronicler of 354 gives as the length of the reign of Maximin three years, four months, two days, which would give 17th March 235 to 18th July 238 (Hist. Aug. xxi. i.). The latter date cannot be right (for Alexandrian coins show that the seventh trib. year of Gordian III. ran from 30th August 243 to 29th August 244, proving that Gordian was elected before 29th August 238; the latest possible date for the dethronement of Maximus and Balbinus would therefore be 1st August, and in the thirteen days between 18th July and that day, there is not room for the arrival of the news of Maximin's death at Rome, for the journey of Maximus to Aquileia and his stay there); hence Seeck emends menses iii. (for menses iiii.), which gives 17th June for Maximin's death. He calculates that the siege of Aquileia began in the beginning or middle of May.

The Chronicler of 354 gives ninety-nine days for the reign of Maximus and Balbinus; and twenty days for that of the two Gordians, but Seeck shows from Zonaras (622 D.), and Glycas (243 C.) that this number should be twenty-two. Allowing roughly 130 days from the elevation of the Gordians to the fall of Maximus and Balbinus, we get 24th March, as the *latest possible* date for the elevation of the Gordians. This calculation would suit Cod. Just. vii. 26, 5 (Imp. Gordianus A. Marino), which is subscribed xii. Kal. April Pio et Pontiano Coss., and would prove that the reign of Gordianus began before 21st March. But we should have to emend Impp. Gordiani.

It must be remembered that this plausible reconstruction of Seeck depends on the emendation of a text.

13. AUTHORITIES FOR ORIENTAL AFFAIRS—(Chapter VIII.)

The Armenian writers: Moses of Chorene, History of Armenia; Agathangelus, History of the Reign of Tiridates and the Preaching of Gregory Illuminator (Müller, F. H. G. v. 2; transl. by V. Langlois); Faustus of Byzantium, Historical Library (*ib.*). The credibility of Moses of Chorene is examined in an important article by Gutschmid in the Berichte der kön. sächs. Gesellschaft d. Wissensch, 1876. A. Carrière has recently attempted to show (Nouvelles Sources de Moïse de Khoren, 1893) that the work of Moses belongs not to the latter half of the fifth, but to the beginning of the eighth century.

Agathias, the Greek historian, who wrote at the end of the sixth century, made a special study of Sassanid history, and, through a friend, derived information from Persian documents. His digression on the origin of the new Persian kingdom (bk. ii. 26, 27) is important.

Rawlinson's Sixth and Seventh Oriental Monarchies treat of the Parthian and new Persian periods respectively. Gutschmid, Geschichte Irans von Alexander dem Grossen bis zum Untergang der Arsaciden, 1888. Justi, Geschichte Persiens. Nöldeke, Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sassaniden, 1879. Schneiderwirth, Die Parther, 1874. Drexler, Caracallas Zug nach dem Orient.

14. THE ZEND AVESTA—(P. 197 *sqq.*)

The first European translation of the Avesta was made by Anquetil du Perron, and appeared (in 3 vols.) in 1771, just in time for Gibbon to make use of. The appearance of this work aroused a storm of controversy, chiefly in England, and it is interesting to observe that Gibbon was among those who

accepted the Avesta as genuine documents of the Zoroastrian religion. It is unnecessary to say that in the present century their antiquity has been abundantly confirmed.

The Avesta is a liturgical collection of fragments from older texts, and is (as M. Darmesteter remarks) more like a prayer-book than a Bible. It consists of two parts, of which the first (1) contains the Vendîdâd, the Visperâd, and the Yasna. The Vendîdâd (a corruption of *vîdaêvô-dâtem* = "antidemoniac law") consists of religious laws and legendary tales; the Visperâd, of litanies for sacrifice; and the Yasna, of litanies also, and five hymns in an older dialect than the rest of the work. The second part (2) is the Small Avesta, a collection of short prayers.

Two questions arise: (*a*) When was the Avesta compiled? (*b*) What is the origin of the older texts which supplied the material?

(*a*) It is generally supposed that the Avesta was first collected under the Sassanids. But it is stated in a Pahlavi authority that the collection was begun under the Arsacids (having been ordered by King Valkash or Vologeses) and completed under the Sassanid Shapûr II. in the fourth century (A.D. 309-380). If this is true, we must modify the usual view of the revival of Mazdeism by Ardeshîr the first Sassanid, and regard his religious movement as merely the thorough realization of an idea derived from the Parthian princes. M. Darmesteter concludes his discussion of the question thus (Introduction to his translation of the Zend Avesta, p. xxxv.): "It can be fairly admitted, that even in the time and at the court of the Philhellenic Parthians a Zoroastrian movement may have originated, and that there came a time when they perceived that a national religion is a part of national life. It was the merit of the Sassanids that they saw the drift of this idea which they had the good fortune to carry out." It would of course be vain to attempt to determine which of the four or five kings named Vologeses originated the collection. The completion under Shapûr II. is an established fact.

(*b*) As to the older texts from which the Avesta was put together, Darmesteter concludes that "the original texts of the Avesta were not written by the Persians. . . . They were written in Media by the priests of Ragha and Atropatene in the language of Media, and they exhibit the ideas of the sacerdotal class under the Achaemenian dynasty."

There is a Parsi tradition that of twenty-one original books the Vendîdâd is the sole remaining one. But Zend scholars seem uncertain as to how far this tradition is to be accepted. For the original religion of Ahura-mazda, as it existed under the Achaemenians, our sources are (1) the inscriptions of Darius and his successors, and (2) Herodotus and other Greek writers.

Those who wish to know more of the Avesta and the Zoroastrian religion may be sent to M. Darmesteter's translation of the Vendîdâd (vol. iv. of the "Sacred Books of the East") and his admirable Introduction, to which I am indebted for the summary in this note. This translation has superseded those of Spiegel and De Harlez; but it must be observed that the students of the sacred books of the Persians constantly disagree in a very marked way, in translation as well as in interpretation.

15. THE ORIGIN OF THE GOTHS; AND THE GOTHIC HISTORY OF JORDANES—(P. 239 *sqq.*)

The earliest mention of the Goths of which we have any record occurred in the work of Pytheas of Massilia, who lived towards the end of the fourth century B.C. and is famous as the earliest explorer of the North. His good faith has been called in question by some ancient writers, but the moderns take a more favourable view of his work, so far as it is known from the references of such writers as Strabo and Pliny. (See Müllenhoff, Deutsche Alterthumskunde, I.) His notice of the Goths is cited by Pliny, Nat. Hist. xxxvii. 2: *Pytheas Guttonibus Germaniae genti accoli aestuarium Oceani Mentonomon nomine spatio stadiorum sex milia; ab hoc dici navigatione insulam abesse Abalum.* The names

Abalum and *Mentonomon* are mysterious; but there seems ground for inferring that in the fourth century B.C. the *Guttones* lived in the same regions on the shores of the Baltic which they occupied in the first century A.D. (Pliny, Nat. Hist. iv. 14; Tacitus, Germ. 43, Gotones). Nor is there any good ground for refusing to identify the *Gotones* or *Guttones* of the first century with the *Gothi* of the third. (See Hodgkin, Italy and her Invaders, vol. i. cap. i., to which I would refer for a full discussion, as well as to Dahn's Könige der Germanen.)

Our chief source for the early history of the Goths is the Getica (or de origine actibusque Getarum) of Jordanes (whom it was formerly usual to call Jornandes, a name which appears only in inferior Mss.). Jordanes (a Christian name suggesting the river Jordan) was a native of Lower Moesia, and lived in the sixth century in the reign of Justinian. It is not quite certain to what nationality he belonged; but it is less probable that he was a genuine Goth or even a Teuton than that he was of Alanic descent. A certain Candac had led a mixed body of barbarians, Scyri, Sadagarii and Alans (see Get. l. 265) into Lower Moesia and Scythia; they had settled in the land, assimilated themselves to the surrounding Goths, and adopted the Gothic name, more illustrious than their own. The grandfather of Jordanes had been a notary of Candac, and Jordanes himself was secretary of Candac's nephew Gunthigis. This connexion of the family of Jordanes with a family which was certainly not Gothic, combined with the name of his father Alanoviimuthes, leads us to conclude that Jordanes was an Alan;[1] and this was quite consistent with his being an ardent "Goth". The small Alanic settlement of Moesia merged itself in the Gothic people, just as the larger Alanic population of Spain merged itself in the Vandalic nation. Beginning life as a scribe, Jordanes ended it as a monk (Getica, l. 266), perhaps as a bishop; it has been proposed to identify him with a bishop of Croton who lived at the same time and bore the same name (Mansi, ix. 60).

Jordanes wrote his Getica in the year 551. It was unnecessary for him to say that he had no literary training (*agrammatus*); this fact is written large all over his work. He states that his book was the result of a three days' study of the Gothic History of Cassiodorius the learned minister of Theodoric. The fact is that the Getica is simply an abridgment of the larger work of Cassiodorius (in twelve books); and modern critics (Usener, Hodgkin) not unreasonably question the "three days" of Jordanes. Thus, when we are dealing with Jordanes, we are really, in most cases, dealing with Cassiodorius; and the spirit, the tendency, of Cassiodorius is faithfully reflected in Jordanes. To praise the Gothic race, and especially the Amal line to which Theodoric belonged, was the aim of that monarch's minister; Jordanes writes in the same spirit and echoes the antipathy to the Vandals which was expressed by Cassiodorius. There are, however, also certain original elements in the Getica. There is a significant contrast between the knowledge of the geography of the eastern provinces of the Balkan peninsula and the ignorance of the rest of the empire, which are displayed in this treatise. The stress laid on the institution of Gothic *foederati* may be attributed rather to the Moesian subject of the empire than to the minister of the independent Ostrogothic kingdom.

One of the features of the lost work of Cassiodorius was the manufacture of an ancient history for the Goths by the false identification of that race with the Getae and with the Scythians. The former confusion was suggested by the resemblance of name, the latter by the geographical comprehensiveness of the term Scythia, which embraced all the peoples of the North before they appeared on the scene of history. These fanciful reconstructions are eagerly adopted by Jordanes.

It may be well doubted whether Jordanes consulted on his own account another writer on Gothic history, Ablavius (cp. Gibbon, chap. x. note 5), who is merely a name to us. He cites him with praise (iv. 28 and elsewhere); but

[1] There are internal confirmations of this conclusion,—signs of a special interest taken by Jordanes in the Alans; see Getica, xv. 83, xxiv. 126-7, xliii. 226. See Mommsen, Procemium to his edition, p. x.

there is little doubt that the laudatory references are derived from Cassiodorius. On the other hand it may be supposed that Jordanes, living among Goths, counting himself as a Goth, had some independent knowledge of old Gothic legends and songs to which he refers as mentioned by Ablavius (*ib.*, quem ad modum et in priscis eorum carminibus pene storico ritu, &c.). The emigration of the Goths from Scandzia, the island of the far north, their coming to the land of *Oium*, and battle with the *Spali*, are not indeed historical, but are a genuine Gothic legend; and stand on quite a different footing from the Getic and Scythian discoveries of Cassiodorius.

The other work of Jordanes, a summary of Roman history (entitled de summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum, usually cited as Romana), written partly before, partly after, the Getica, does not concern us here. An account of the sources of both works will be found in Mommsen's exhaustive Procemium to his splendid edition in the Monumenta Germaniæ historica (1882), from which for this brief notice I have selected a few leading points. The reader may also be referred to the clear summary and judicious discussion of Mr. Hodgkin in the introduction and appendix to the first chapter of his Italy and her Invaders, and to Mr. Acland's article "Jordanes" in the Dictionary of Christian Biography.

Some other points in connexion with Jordanes will call for notice when we come to his own time.

16. VISIGOTHS AND OSTROGOTHS—(P. 242)

We cannot say with certainty at what period the Gothic race was severed into the nations of East and West Goths. The question is well discussed by Mr. Hodgkin, in Italy and her Invaders, chap. i. Appendix.

The name Ostrogoth occurs first in the Life of Claudius Gothicus in the Historia Augusta (written about the beginning of the fourth century), and next in Claudian, in Eutrop. ii. 153 (at the end of the same century). Our first testimony to the existence of the Visigothic name is later. In the fifth century Sidonius Apollinaris speaks of the Vesi in two places (Pan. in Avit. 456; Pan. in Major. 458). Is there any ground for inferring that the Ostrogothic name is the older? It looks rather as if at first (c. 300-400) the distinction was between Ostrogoths and Goths; and that the name Visigoth was a later appellation.

We must emphatically reject the view that Gruthungi and Thervingi were old names for Ostrogoths and Visigoths respectively and expressed the same distinction. Mr. Hodgkin has noticed the objections supplied by the passages in the Vita Claudii and Claudian; and they are decisive.

17. THE DEFEAT OF VALERIAN, AND THE DATE OF CYRIADES—(P. 270)

Valerian set out in 257, held a council of war in Byzantium at the beginning of 258 (Hist. Aug. xxvi. 13). Thence he proceeded to Cappadocia. The north coasts of Asia Minor were suffering at this time from the invasions of the Germans, and it has been conjectured that there may have been an understanding between the European and Asiatic enemies of the Empire (as sometimes in later ages; as once before in the days of Decebalus), and that Valerian aimed at preventing a junction of Persians and Goths. *Vict. Parthica* on coins in 259 A.D. point to a victory perhaps near Edessa Where Valerian was captured is uncertain. Cedrenus says in Cæsarea (i. p. 454); the anonymous Continuator of Dion suggests the neighbourhood of Samosata. The date is uncertain too. There is no trace of Valerian after 260 A.D. Inscriptions and sculptures on the rocks of Nakshi Rustan have been supposed to commemorate the Persian victory.

Gibbon, in his "probable series of events" has distinctly gone wrong. Two things are certain: (1) Sapor was twice at Antioch, and (2) Cyriades fell before Valerian. The first visit of the Persian monarch to Antioch was in the summer of 256, whither he was accompanied by Cyriades (also called Mariades, see

Müller, F. H. G. iv. p. 192), whom he had set up in that city as a Persian vassal. Antioch was won back in the same year or in 257; Cyriades was torn to pieces by the inhabitants, and the Persians were massacred. See Ammian, xxiii. 5; Hist. Aug. xxiv. 2. The second visit of Sapor to Antioch was after the capture of Valerian. See Aur. Victor, Cæsar. 33, 3.

18. THE PRETENDERS IN THE REIGN OF GALLIENUS, KNOWN AS THE THIRTY TYRANTS—(P. 275)

Fati publici fuit, says Trebellius Pollio, who recorded the deeds of the tyrants in the Augustan History, *ut Gallieni tempore quicunque potuit, ad imperium prosiliret.* Gibbon recognized that the significance of these shadow-emperors was only "collective"; they all vanished rapidly; the emperor's power always proved superior. Their simultaneous appearance only illustrates vividly the general disintegration of the Empire.

It may be well, however, to add a few details, chiefly references, to the succinct account of Gibbon. I take them in the order of his list.

(1) Cyriades. See p. 270, and Appendix 17.

(2) Macrianus. The generals Macrianus and Balista caused the two sons of the former, T. Fulvius Junius Macrianus and T. Fulvius Junius Quietus, to be proclaimed emperors (261 A.D.; see Hist. Aug. Vita Gall. 1, 2). It is a question whether Macrianus their father (he to whom Gibbon imputed the blame of Valerian's disaster) assumed the purple also. There can, I think, be no doubt that he did not. We have (*a*) the negative evidence that no coins which can be certainly ascribed to him and not to his son are forthcoming; (*b*) the story of his refusal in Hist. Aug. xxiv. 7-11; and (*c*) the positive statement of Zonaras, xii. 24. Against this we have to place the apparent statement in Hist. Aug. xxiii. 1, 2-4 (I say apparent, because the passage is mutilated), and the clear statement in xxiv. 12, 12, which is glaringly inconsistent with the immediately preceding narrative. Macrianus is described as refusing the empire on the ground of old age and bodily weakness, and casting the burden on his sons. Balista, who had offered him the empire, agrees; and then the narrative proceeds: "Macrianus promises (clearly in the name of his sons) a double donation to the soldiers and hurls threats against Gallienus; accordingly he was made emperor along with Macrianus and Quietus his two sons," as if this were the logical outcome of the proceedings. From this evidence there can I think be only one conclusion.

(3) Balista. He has even less claim than the elder Macrianus to a place among the tyrants; like Macrianus he was only a tyrant-maker. Hist. Aug. xxiv. 12, 4, and 18.

(4) Odenathus. The ground for placing Odenathus among the tyrants seems to be that he assumed the title of king (Hist. Aug. xxiv. 15, 2) and that he had great power in the East. But a tyrant means one who rebels against the true emperor and usurps the Imperial title. Odenathus never rebelled against Gallienus and never usurped the title Augustus (Σεβαστός) or the title Cæsar. He supported the interests of Gallienus in the East and overthrew the real tyranny which was set up by Macrianus. For his services Gallienus rewarded him by the title of αὐτοκράτωρ or *imperator*, an unusual title to confer, but not necessarily involving Imperial dignity. (This title is enough to account for the statement in Hist. Aug. xxiii. 12, 1.) As a king he held the same position that, for instance, Agrippa held under Claudius. An inscription of a statue which two of his generals erected in his honour in 271 A.D. has been preserved (de Vogüe, Syrie centrale, p. 28) and there he is entitled king of kings. This, as Schiller says (i. 838), should be decisive.

(5) Zenobia. What applies to Odenathus applies to Zenobia as far as the reign of Gallienus is concerned. She received the title Σεβαστή in Egypt, but not till after 271 and doubtless with the permission of Claudius.

(6) Postumus. (See note 86, p. 256.) He made his residence at Trier, was acknowledged in Spain and Britain, and seems to have taken effective measures

for the tranquillity and security of Gaul. In 262 he celebrated his *quinquennalia* (Eckhel, vii. 438). His coinage is superior to that of the lawful emperors of the time; it did not pass current in Italy, and the Imperial money was excluded from Gaul (Mommsen, Röm. Münzwesen, 815). It is important to observe that Postumus was faithful to the idea of Rome. He was not in any sense a successor of Sacrovir, Vindex and Classicus; he had no thought of an anti-Roman *imperium Galliarum*.

(7) Lollianus. This is the form of the name in our Mss. of his Life in the Historia Augusta (xxiv. 5); his true name, Cornelius Ulpianus Laelianus, is preserved on coins (Cohen, v. 60). In a military mutiny (268 A.D., in his fifth consulship) Postumus was slain and Laelianus elevated. The new tyrant marched against the Germans, who had taken advantage of this struggle (*subita irruptione Germanorum*) to invade the empire and destroy the forts which Postumus during the year of his rule had erected on the frontier; but he was slain by his soldiers,—it is said, because he was too energetic, *quod in labore nimius esset* (Hist. Aug. xxiv. 5). Victorinus, who succeeded him, had probably something to do with his death.

(8) Victorinus. In 265 A.D. Gallienus sent Aureolus to assert his authority in Gaul against Postumus. In the course of the war, an Imperial commander M. Piauvonius Victorinus deserted to the tyrant, who welcomed him and created him Cæsar. Victorinus obtained supreme power after the death of Laelianus. He reigned but a few months; his death is noticed by Gibbon in chap. xi.

Victoria or Victorina. The mother of Victorinus (see chap. xi.). Her coins are condemned as spurious (Cohen, 5, 75).

(9) Marius. M. Aurelius Marius; Eckhel, vii. 454. According to Hist. Aug. xxiv. 8. 1, he reigned only three days after the death of Victorinus. Perhaps he survived Victorinus by three days, but there can be no doubt that he arose as a tyrant, at an earlier date, perhaps immediately after the death of Postumus. If he had reigned only three days, it is unlikely we should have his coins. Compare Schiller, i. 856.

(10) Tetricus. (See chap. xi.)

(11) Ingenuus. His tyranny was set up in Pannonia and Moesia in the same year as that of Postumus in Gaul (258 A.D.). He was defeated by Aureolus at Mursa—the scene of the defeat of a more famous tyrant in later times—and slain, at his own request, by his shield-bearer.

(12) Regillianus. A Dacian, who held the post of *dux* of Illyricum; his true name was Regalianus, preserved on coins and in one Ms. of the Historia Augusta. He had won victories against the Sarmatians, and his name, in its corrupt form, lent itself to the declension of *rex*: "rex, regis, regi, Regi-lianus" (Hist. Aug. xxiv. 10, 5). But his reign lasted only for a moment. His elevation was probably due to disaffection produced by the hard measures adopted by Gallienus in Pannonia when he suppressed the revolt of Ingenuus.

(13) Aureolus. (See chap. xi.)

(14) Saturninus. Of him we know nothing. See Hist. Aug. xxiv. 23, and xxiii. 9, 1.

(15) Trebellianus. See Hist. Aug. xxiv. 26; beyond what is stated there we know nothing. *Palatium in arce Isauriae constituit.* He was slain by an Egyptian, brother of the man who slew Æmilianus, tyrant in Egypt, see below.

(16) Piso. It is probably a mistake to include Piso among the tyrants. He belonged to the party of Macrianus (see above), who in 261 sent him to Greece to overpower the governor Valens. But a curious thing happened. Piso, who had come in the name of a tyrant, supported the cause of the lawful emperor Gallienus (see Hist. Aug. xxiv. 21. 4), while Valens, who represented the cause of Gallienus, revolted, and became a tyrant himself. Both Piso and Valens were slain by their soldiers;—the news of Piso's death had reached Rome by the 25th June (Hist. Aug. *ib.* 3).

(17) Valens. See last note.

(18) Æmilianus. He threatened to starve the empire, which depended for corn on Egypt. There are no genuine coins of this tyrant.

(19) Celsus. Elevated by the proconsul of Africa and the *dux limitis Libyci.* Hist. Aug. xxiv. 29.

Of these nineteen, Macrianus, Balista, Odenathus, Zenobia, and Piso have no claim to be regarded as tyrants. But the places of Macrianus the father and Balista may be filled by Macrianus the son and Quietus. Thus the number nineteen is reduced to sixteen.

It is worth noting that Pollio, who, as Gibbon says, "expresses the most minute anxiety to complete the number" of the thirty tyrants, and as we have seen includes some who were certainly not tyrants, should omit two names of rebels which are mentioned by Zosimus. In i. 38 (ed. Mendelssohn) this historian says: ἐν τούτῳ δὲ ἐπαναστάντων αὐτῷ (Gallienus) Μέμορος τε τοῦ Μουρουσίου καὶ Αὐριόλου καὶ Ἀντωνίνου καὶ ἑτέρων πλειόνων. Aurelius we know; ἑτέρους πλείονας we know; but who were Memor and Antoninus? Are they mentioned by Pollio under other names or did they not reach the length of an Imperial title? Of Antoninus as far as I know we hear nowhere else, but of Memor we have a notice, in a fragment of the Anonymous Continuer of Dion Cassius (Müller, F. H. G. iv. p. 193), frag. 4, where the mention of a Theodotus recalls him who put to death Æmilianus and makes us think of Egypt. (In the old Stephanian text of Zosimus Κέκροπος is read instead of Μέμορος; but the unknown Ms. used by Stephanus seems to have been worthless.)

19. ZENOBIA—(P. 302 *sqq.*)

In regard to Gibbon's account of the war of Aurelian with Zenobia, the following points are to be observed:—

(1) This war preceded the subjugation of Tetricus and Gaul.

(2) After her husband's death Zenobia took the title βασίλισσα, and while her son Wahballath succeeded to his father's position as *dux Romanorum* and Lord of Palmyra, she really ruled. The name Wahballath, meaning *dea dedit*, was rendered in Greek by Ἀθηνόδωρος.

(3) The story told by Gibbon from Hist. Aug. xxiii. 13, that Zenobia defeated a Roman army (under one Heraclian) is suspicious (see Schiller, i. 859, note 1); for we find her on good terms with the Roman government immediately after, and she recovers Egypt, which was under the usurper Probatus, for Claudius, who was too much occupied with the Gothic danger to proceed himself against the tyrant. Her son Wahballath governed in Egypt as the representative of Claudius, and the circumstance that he was officially named βασιλεύς does not imply that he was a rebel.

(4) Aurelian on his accession 270 A.D. recognized Wahballath as vir consularis Romanorum Imperator dux Romanorum; he appeared beside Aurelian on coins; and his mother assumed the title Augusta.

(5) Wahballath began to issue coins without the head of Aurelian and assumed the title Augustus. This seems to have been a consequence of an estrangement from the Emperor; but we do not know the immediate circumstances. The position which the Palmyrene family occupied was obviously inconsistent with the unity of the Empire.

(6) The following stages may be marked in the course of the war: (*a*) Probus establishes the authority of Aurelian in Egypt, and the forces of Zenobia fail at Chalcedon; (*b*) Aurelian takes Ancyra and Tyana, and passes into Syria; (*c*) Zenobia's army is driven from Antioch, and (*d*) defeated at Emesa; (*e*) the surrender of Palmyra (early in 272); (*f*) its final destruction (spring 273).

(7) Von Sallet, who has thrown much light on this episode in his work Die Fürsten von Palmyra, thinks that the catastrophe of Palmyra was accomplished before the end of 271. But there are serious objections to his chronology. See Schiller, i. 857-864.

20. CORRECTOR ITALIÆ—(P. 312)

As Gibbon notices, two statements are made in the Historia Augusta, as to the honourable provision which Aurelian made for Tetricus. In the Life of

Tetricus (xxiv. 24, 5) we read: conrectorem *totius Italiæ* fecit, id est, Campaniae, Samni, Lucaniæ, Brittiorum [Bruttii], Apuliæ, Calabriæ, Etruriæ atque Umbriæ, Piceni et Flaminiæ omnisque annonariæ regionis; but in the Life of Aurelian (xxvi. 39, 1) Tetricum triumphatum correctorem *Lucaniæ* fecit (so Aurel. Victor. &c.). Both statements cannot be true, and Mommsen (Ephem. epig. i. 140) has proved that the first is to be accepted and the second rejected.

We find the idea of a governor of Italy in the famous advice to Augustus which Dion Cassius (52, 21) puts in the mouth of Maecenas. It is suggested that Italy beyond a circuit of a hundred miles from Rome should be governed like the provinces. But as early as 214 we find C. Suetrius Sabinus, a consular, as *electus ad corrigendum statum Italiæ* (C. I. L. x. 5398) and at a later period Pomponius Bassus ἐπανορθωτὴς πάσης Ἰταλίας. See further Mommsen, *loc. cit.*, and Staatsrecht, ii. 1086.

Thus we find that correctors of all Italy were occasionally appointed, during the third century. Therefore, Mommsen argues convincingly (and it is a good instance of the application of a principle of historical criticism), the notice that Tetricus was *corrector Italiæ* is the true one. For a later writer to whom correctors of Lucania were perfectly familiar would never have changed a *corrector Lucaniæ* into a *corrector Italiæ*.

21. PROBUS AND THE LIMES GERMANICUS—(P. 331)

The statement of Gibbon that Probus "constructed a stone wall of a considerable height, and strengthened it by towers at convenient distances" is not warranted by the evidence, which consists entirely of two remarks in his Life in the Hist. Aug.:—

(1) c. 13. contra urbes Romanas et castra in solo barbarico posuit atque illic milites collocavit.

(2) c. 14. sed visum est id non posse fieri nisi si limes Romanus extenderetur et fieret Germania tota provincia. (*id* refers to the command of Probus, that the German dependent tribes should not fight themselves, but, when attacked, seek the aid of the Roman army.)

It will be observed that the only statement of fact is in the first passage, from which we learn that Probus constructed and garrisoned some forts on soil which was then barbarian. The second passage states no fact, but ventilates a, perhaps wild, hypothesis.

It is also to be noticed that the actual Wall, constructed long before the time of Probus, was not a regular wall of hewn stone, and that its length between the points that Gibbon roughly marks was more than 300 (not "near 200") miles.

It may be added that the limes (both the trans-Rhenane and the trans-Danubian) was probably due chiefly to Domitian and Hadrian.

There is a considerable literature on the Imperial limes; but all previous works will be superseded by "Der Obergermanischraetische Limes des Römerreichs," edited by O. von Sarwey and F. Hettner, and published under the auspices of the Reichs-Limes-Kommission. This work is appearing in parts.

22. GERMAN CAMPAIGNS OF DIOCLETIAN, MAXIMIAN AND CONSTANTIUS (A.D. 285-299)—(P. 361 *sqq.*)

(1) There was a campaign in spring 285, against German invaders of the Danubian regions, in consequence of which Diocletian assumed the title of *Germanicus Maximus*. Cp. Corp. Insc. Lat. vi. 1116.

(2) In 286 the Alamanni (who, pushed by the Burgundians, had left their old abodes on the Main and established themselves along the banks of the Rhine, within the *limes*, from Mainz to Lake Constance) and Burgundians invaded Gaul. Maximian was at Mainz, in June (Frag. Vat. 271). The Heruls and Chaibones also approached the frontier, but their host was destroyed by Maximian, who

allowed plague and famine to work havoc among the Alamannic invaders. See Mamertinus, Pan. Max. v. and Genethl. Max. 17.

(3) At the beginning of 287 marauding expeditions had to be repelled and Maximian won back some territory beyond the Rhine. Mamertinus, Pan. Max. 6, 10.

(4) 291; war with the Franks, of whom large numbers were settled in lands of the Nervii and round Trier. Cp. Incert. Pan. Constant. Cæs. 21, Mamert. Genethl. Max. 7.

(5) 293, summer; Constantius, having taken Gesoriacum, invades the land of the Franks, and, returning victorious, settles a large number as *coloni* in Gaul. It has been conjectured (Schiller, ii. 132) that the regions of the Lower Meuse and Rhine were now once more incorporated in the Empire as the province of Germania Secunda, which is mentioned in the List of provinces found at Verona (see Introduction, p. li.)

(6) After the recovery of Britain, Constantius busied himself with the fortification of the Rhine frontier. In 298 the victories of Langres and Windisch (Vindonissa) were won over the Alamanni.

(7) In 299 Constantius invaded the land of the Alamanni; Incert. Pan. Constantio Cæs. 2, 3.

For the determination of the chronology Mommsen's study in the Abhandlungen of the Berlin Academy, 1860, is invaluable.

23. DIOCLETIAN'S TARIFF OF MAXIMUM PRICES—(P. 377)

The most celebrated work of Diocletian in the field of political economy was the edict (referred to by Lactantius in De Mort. persecutorum, 7; partial copies of it have been discovered since Gibbon wrote in the form of inscriptions) fixing maximum prices for provisions and wages, 301 A.D. See Corp. Insc. Lat. iii. 801 *sqq.* It had been found that, notwithstanding plenteous harvests, prices and wages went up. The soldiers especially suffered, and, unable to purchase their provisions from their pay, were obliged to draw upon their savings. It is probable that the law was not universal, but applied only to those provinces which were ruled directly by Diocletian; it is also probable that it was enforced only for a few years. For a full discussion see Mommsen's paper in the Berichte der könsächsischen Ges. d. Wissensch., phil.-hist. klasse, 1851. The text is published in a convenient form by Mommsen, with notes by Blümner, 1893.

The monetary reforms of Diocletian, though they were not permanent, have some interest in connexion with this edict. He coined a new aureus of 60 to a pound of gold; he restored the denarius of silver; and introduced some new copper coins. The relative value of silver to gold seems to have been determined at 14·27 to 1. See Finlay, Hist. of Greece, vol. 1, App. 1.

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